

May 28, 2023
Cycle A – 7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:12-14

Psalm: 27

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 7:1-11

Notes from Bishop Peter

1. The Apostles long for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Example: in our family my mom and us kids longed for my dad to come home from the navy during World War II.
2. They are locked up together, fearful of the Romans and the Jewish authorities. When the Spirit comes, however, they will be transformed from weaklings into heroes as the Spirit helps them move into society to preach Jesus Christ despite the persecution they know will be forthcoming.
3. In the Gospel Jesus prays for his Apostles, that they may really know the Father and Jesus himself as the one the Father has sent.
 - a. To know here includes love, to love. The Apostles preached the good news, the Gospel, because they not only knew Jesus but loved him.
 - b. In fact the Apostle John came to the conclusion that God is love! He saw it in Jesus – how he laid down his life for his friends and for all humanity – how he portrayed his Father as a God of mercy and forgiveness in the parable of the Prodigal Son – how he cared for human beings and had compassion on people who suffered – thus he cured sick people, forgave sinners giving them a greater sense of their own dignity; he fed hungry people and showed that mercy trumps justice in the parable of the workers sent to the vineyard at different hours but who received the same pay because they all had to feed their families. He was non-violent, choosing to absorb evil rather than returning it. And he challenged people then and now with such teachings as: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who persecute you.” God is love and all that word includes such as sweet and tough love.
4. Jesus asks his Father to glorify him with the glory he had with the Father before the creation of the universe. What does this mean?
 - a. Ultimately it refers to the lowest moment in his life, his suffering and death on the cross. Isn't that contradictory? Apparently, yes but the ways of God

are not those of the world. Jesus obeys his Father and goes through his suffering to show that he is love. If we look on him with the eyes of our faith, we see him glorified as does Saint John.

b. He calls us to love him, not as would a bully by threatening us but by “emptying himself, humbling himself unto death, death on a cross.” Just as he made himself accessible at his birth – who can be afraid of a baby? – so too does he on the cross. We see this on Good Friday as the faithful venerate the cross. No one is afraid to come forward.

5. This glory has as its source the Holy Spirit who permeates the hearts and souls of all the faithful. As we open the eyes of our faith, we can see that glory manifested in people and communities who suffer and struggle to live Jesus’s commandment of charity. Some examples:

- My friend who lost both his feet due to diabetes. In his pain he turns to Jesus and asks for help. Also, his wife is making an heroic effort to care for him, along with family members and an aide. “For better, for worse, in sickness and in health...”
- In the eyes of a pregnant woman, so close to the growing human life in her
- In communities of faith such as our parishes where people try to serve one another and make efforts to be kind...
- In my friend Arthur Laffin, originally from Hartford, who resides in the Catholic Worker House in Washington, D.C. He lives like a monk along with his wife and son and is totally committed to the Gospel imperative of non-violence in the line of Dorothy Day
- In the Community of Taizé in eastern France where men of several religious traditions and from 5 continents strive to love one another and to receive pilgrims, especially young adults, with kindness and generosity.

6. We come now to the Eucharistic part of our Mass. It is a summary of Jesus at his moment of glorification on the cross and Jesus who pours his Holy Spirit into our hearts so we may manifest his glory by our efforts to love one another as he has loved us. **Amen.**