

# The Paper Pulpit

*(Reflections from the Pastor)*

## **6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Easter**

Several years ago, the bishops in the United States transferred the Feast of the Ascension to the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter in most states. Thus, this Thursday is NOT a Holy Day of Obligation. We will celebrate our Lord's return (ascension) to God the Father in heaven next weekend at all Masses. Jesus was no longer to be a visible, bodily presence among those who love him. Everything was going to change. And so he left gifts. We tend to take those gifts for granted. Baptism is one of the gifts. We become dwelling places of the Holy Spirit. We become part of the Community of faith.

Jesus gave us the Eucharist. Like Baptism, it is a very simple thing. We take bread and drink wine, and know it is the Lord, not just a symbol, but His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. Once again, the Eucharist is not a personal thing, it is a community meal. Jesus gave us the Catholic Church, the community of all the faithful, dead, living, and to come.

The greatest gift Jesus gave us was love. He gave the gift and issued a new commandment "*that you should love one another.*" Without love, none of the other gifts is of any use. If our parish is loveless, it isn't a place of Christian worship. We have to remember what love means in the Christian vocabulary. It does not mean warm fuzzy feelings. In the Epistle, the writer says some very profound words. "*Everyone who loves is born of God, for God is love.*"

**Scripture:** "*Beloved, sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts... Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.*"

The above words were written by our 1<sup>st</sup> Pope, St. Peter (1 Peter 3:15-18). If you look at what he is saying, he writes that we must always be ready to give an explanation for our faith. Can you explain your faith to others? Why or why not? If not, what can you do to help you learn the faith? Answer: How about attending one of the parish bible studies, or how about listening to Catholic radio 93.9 FM or how about watching Catholic TV EWTN, channel 19, as a way to begin. These are all good sources to help you learn the faith. When we explain our faith, St. Peter says we must do it in gentleness and reverence. We don't win converts by arguing but by love. Then St. Peter says even if they don't believe you, they are the ones who are put to shame.

We also read this week about the Sacrament of Confirmation in the early Church. *Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.* This is from the Acts of the Apostles 8:14-17. All Catholics should have this scripture memorized.

Using the scripture, we can fill with the following. Now when the Bishop in La Crosse heard that (Portage County) had accepted the word of God, they sent them William, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then he laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. See, we do today what was done in the beginning.

**Men of the Parish:** I am asking all men of the parish to join our Men's Group under the umbrella of the Knights of Columbus. We will have a First Degree this Tuesday evening at 7:00. I am especially asking all dads of Mass servers to join as we'll need to do some fund raising for server activities this summer. Please arrive at the parish by 6:30.

**Milwaukee Brewers trip:** Want to go to see the Milwaukee Brewers play the Phillies on Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>? The cost is \$60.00 per person. Mass Servers go free. The Knights of Columbus will be covering the cost of Mass Servers. The \$60.00 covers the cost of the ticket for the game, the bus and lunch. Sign-up sheet in the Gathering Space.

**Hospital, nursing home and home visits:** Deacon Rich and I want to make sure we are visiting all folks who are in the hospital, nursing home or homebound. If you know of someone who is in an area nursing home or homebound and would like visits, please let Deacon Rich know.

**Congratulations to our graduates** who graduated from our area high schools (I'm sure I'll miss one if I name them) UWSP, MSTC and to all those who graduate this spring. May God bless your future endeavors.

*Sincerely in Christ, Fr. Jim Trempe*