

## 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

When a child is very young he or she can have a very strong attachment to the mother. The child may cling tightly to his or her mother and not want to be separated. Sometimes it can be difficult for the mother to do something apart from the child, such as go to the bathroom, or go to the store. Once the child is separated from the mother the child will usually start crying and demanding to be given back to his or her mother. The child might not settle down until safely back in the arms of the mother.

It is in this sense that Jesus is preparing His disciples for the time when they will be separated from Him. (see Jn 14:23-29) This Gospel reading takes place at the Last Supper in which Jesus is preparing His disciples for His upcoming crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Jesus knows that His disciples will be separated from Him for a short time, and that they will be greatly distressed by His death. But He wants to assure them that “I will come back to you.” (v.28) On the third day He will rise from the dead, and will be by their side from that time on (at least in spirit). Jesus offers His peace so that their hearts will not be troubled. Jesus gives peace, not like the world gives it (v.27).

This Monday (Memorial Day) we honor those military personnel that gave their lives for our country. Perhaps there are some families here at the parish that have lost a loved one while he or she was serving in the military. You know the pain of losing that person and being separated from him or her. All of us have lost a loved one in our lives, whether it was a parent, spouse, brother or sister, etc. We all know the grief that comes from separation from that person. Jesus wants to assure all of His disciples that He is always by our side. We can trust that Jesus is always with us in darkness and in light, in joyful times and in sad times. When we are hurting; and when we feel good. Jesus is always with us. He offers us His peace to sustain us at those times when we may feel that we can no longer carry on. And Jesus wants to assure us that, even though we may be separated from our loved ones, it will only be for a short time. Jesus will gather us all together again in His kingdom.

In the second reading from the book of Revelation (21:10-14, 22-23) we heard about John seeing a vision of “the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendor of God.” (v.10-11) This is a symbolic vision of heaven, or God’s kingdom. It is radiantly beautiful because that is the way that we should envision heaven. Not only will everything be beautiful in heaven, but we will also be with our loved ones again. God will gather us all together where there will be no more weeping or pain. God will make all things new again. (see Rev 21:4-5)

One thing that struck me about this vision that we heard about in the second reading is that the city will have no need of light from the sun or the moon (v.23). The glory of God will give it light, and its lamp will be the lamb. The glory of God will provide the light because we will be in the presence of God. We will never be separated from God again. God will always be with us. But we do have a foretaste of this light now. When we are baptized, we receive the light of Christ (Rite of Baptism). We don’t have to wait until we are in heaven to enjoy having the light of Christ. We have His light within us now. This interior light is always with us guiding us on our journey of life. His light will guide us to eternal life. Where His light will be illuminating His kingdom and His people forever.