

Reflection for the 6th Sunday of Easter Sunday, 17th May 2020

If you do not have a copy of the missalette, you can find today's readings at www.universalis.com

John Grisham is a very talented author. Most of his books involve a lawyer as the hero who comes to the assistance of someone on the margins of society who is seeking justice. By skilled questioning, the truth is uncovered and the innocence of the underdog is established. In many of his novels a bond of friendship develops between the legal expert and the person he is seeking to help. With lots of twists and turns in the plot, we are kept on the edge of our seats until the final chapter, where right wins out over wrong.

In today's gospel, Jesus promises the disciples at the last supper that he will send an "Advocate" to be their counsellor and to be their friend. The Holy Spirit will be with them, replacing Jesus, so that they are not left as orphans. The disciples had to wait until Pentecost Sunday before they could understand these words of Jesus, and only in their mission during the years that followed, would they come to realise what a friend the Holy Spirit would be to them.

However, there is a key difference between the stories of John Grisham and the way we experience the Holy Spirit in our lives. In his plots, the underdog, who is falsely accused, is, in fact, innocent and it only remains for the good lawyer to establish this fact. If it were the case that the accused was after all guilty, then the story would not work at all.

In our case, the Father sends us the Holy Spirit to be our defender, even though we are guilty. Yes, we all take part in the sinfulness of the human condition. It was precisely because of this that the Father sent us his only begotten Son, so that we might be forgiven. When Jesus breathed on the disciples and told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and in this way he gave them power, in turn, to forgive others. Bringing forgiveness is part and parcel of who God is, it is what he does. We are the ones who sin, God is the one who wants those sins to be forgiven. In the realisation that we are forgiven, even though we don't deserve it, we can begin to fathom the love which is the glue that keeps God in being. By accepting what the Spirit does for us, we can become part of that ceaseless cycle of being loved and loving.

During this week the government has cautiously removed some of the restrictions designed to keep the Covid-19 virus at bay. We still do not know when churches will reopen or when we shall be able to gather as a community of prayer and praise. When we do come together again, the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be key. It is through the Holy Spirit that we learn to put the scars of sin aside and begin to see the bigger picture, as God sees it. With the friendship of the Spirit, we can begin to hope again.

In our society today, many people are passionate about many issues. Our politicians are continually being lobbied with people trying to promote one course of action over another. Even in our parish council meetings, different points of view are expressed, sometimes quite vehemently. Alas, when I believe something so strongly, I become deaf to other arguments and blind to other courses of action. This is precisely where the Holy Spirit comes in.

To make a good decision, I need the gift of indifference. I need to be able to understand the opposing point of view, and even be prepared to accept it if this is what God is inviting me to do. When we can learn to put aside the stubbornly held beliefs which we cling to, we can begin to open ourselves to a world much deeper and wider than the one we currently inhabit.

After the threat of this virus is passed we will need to come together and work for a new world order. We are being challenged to work out what our real priorities are. We can open our hearts to receiving the promptings of the Advocate, sent by God to defend us, sent by God to be our friend, but sent by God to show us how we can make his creation something he would be proud of. With the gifts of courage and imagination we can build a new church, a new country and a new world order. Let us pray for these gifts.

St Peter's/St Joseph's Bidding Prayers

16th / 17th May 2020

Priest:

Jesus promised to send the disciples the "Advocate", his Holy Spirit, to be our comforter and guide. Let us pray for the gifts of the spirit.

Reader:

Many people are frightened, they are not sure if they should go out or remain at home. We pray all may be able to live their lives without fear.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for those who are mentally challenged by the current situation. May contact with family and friends help them to see how much they are loved.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for those returning to work. May their employers make sure everyone is kept safe.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for our children and grandchildren. May they feel safe, loved and cared for. May they grow in mind, body and spirit.

Lord in your mercy.

We commend to the loving mercy of God those who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur at about this time: May they all rest in the peace of the Lord.

Lord in your mercy.

Each one of us has received the Holy Spirit from God. Let us spend one moment being aware of how the Spirit is moving in our hearts.

[After a pause]

Lord in your mercy.

Mary kept the disciples together as they waited for the Holy Spirit. Let us ask her to intercede on our behalf.

Hail Mary....

Priest:

We have made our prayers knowing that God listens to us. We present them to the risen Lord Jesus, for he lives now and forever.

Amen.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

(with St Joseph's, Hurst Green)

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17th May 2020

THE NEWSLETTER

6th Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Mass Schedule for this week

Fr Tim will offer a private Mass each day for the following intentions

Date	Time	Fr Tim's Private Mass Intention	Feast
Sa 16 th		Gordon Nicholson L	Vigil of 6 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
Su 17 th		For the parish	6 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
M 18 th		Private Intention	Weekday in the Easter Season
T 19 th		Adrian Aylward L	Weekday in the Easter Season
W 20 th		CHC Trustees	Weekday in the Easter Season
Th 21 st		For SMH	Feast of the Ascension
F 22 nd		Ashley and Calderwood Families RIP	Weekday in the Easter Season

(No Holy Hour or Benediction until further notice.)

L = Lately Dead, A = Anniversary of Death, R = Remembrance M = Martyr, V = Virgin, B = Bishop, Pp = Pope
 P = Personal Intention, S = Sick, B = Birthday F = Founders Mass D = Doctor, P = Priest, R = Religious

Please pray for the following, the anniversary of whose deaths occur at this time: Ethel Mercia (Bunty) Devlin, Charles Leo Hayhurst, Edmund Arrowsmith and Francis Aloysius Holden. *May they rest in peace.*

Readings at Mass

	6 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)	7 th Sunday of Easter
First	Acts 8; 5 - 8, 14 - 17	Acts 1; 12 - 14
Second	I Peter 3; 15 - 18	I Peter 4; 13 - 16
Gospel	John 14; 15 - 21	John 17; 1 - 11

Diocesan Website:

<http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk>

for information on our Diocese and what is happening.

Praying with the Pope in May 2020

We pray that deacons, faithful in their service of the word, and the poor, may be an invigorating influence in the church.

Look at www.ThePopeVideo.org for more information



"I will not leave you orphans", says the Lord

We shall continue to send out the newsletter until we are able to gather again in church. Together with other resources, it is also available on line on the parish website and in the parish resources box by the Cenotaph.

Fr Tim's availability

Each day Fr Tim will be in the Parish Office from 9am to 10am and available on the parish number (01254 826268).

At other times, leave a message on the parish answer machine, which will be responded as soon as possible.

A daily prayer sheet is now available on-line and in the box by the cenotaph in the village.

Resources for children

St Anselm's, our Jesuit church in Southall have a great video on their homepage suitable for younger children: click on the link

<http://stanselmchurchsouthall.com>

Live Streaming of Mass

Many people have been able to find a Mass on line. Jesuit parishes that do this are Farm Street, Southall and the Oxford Chaplaincy. You can also try www.churchservices.tv.

Buddies

Many people are still being helped by a phone call from their "buddy" every day. Keep it up!

Today

Is the Sixth Sunday of Easter. In the gospel, Jesus promises to send the second "Advocate", the Holy Spirit, to the disciples. As usual, Fr Tim celebrates the Vigil Mass in St Peter's at 5.30 on Saturday and at 9.30 on Sunday in St Joseph's. I'm glad that many people have Mass on line.

Rosary Group

A group of parishioners are saying the rosary each Wednesday during May through Zoom. This Wednesday the time will be 7.30pm. If you would like to join this group, let Fr Tim know and he will send you the link.

Ascension Thursday

Thursday is Ascension Thursday – 40 days after his resurrection Jesus goes back to his father. As we still can't gather for Mass, Fr Tim will prepare a sheet to help us celebrate at home.

Novena to the Holy Spirit

Many people like to mark the 10 days between the Ascension and Pentecost by making a novena. Each day pray for one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Next Sunday

Is the Seventh Sunday of the Easter Season. In the gospel Jesus is praying for his disciples. Through them he prays for us as well.

Statistics

Last week we delivered 120 copies of the newsletter and 112 people looked at it on line. 21 people read the daily reflections on line and 6 people took printed copies from the box in the village.

Book of remembrance and prayer

Fr Tim has opened a book of remembrance and prayer for those connected with the parish and the Stonyhurst/SMH community who are sick or who have passed away. If you would like some names to be added to this book, let Fr Tim know. They will be remembered at Mass every day.

Care for our cemetery

Grass cutting in the cemetery has resumed. If you leave mementos on the graves of your loved ones, please make sure the strimmer can get round them. Thank you.

Preparing for the reopening of churches

Hopefully our churches will reopen soon. The bishop has suggested that when churches are open, a volunteer is on hand to encourage visitors to stay safe. Would anyone like to volunteer for St Peter's? Please let Fr Tim know.

Cards from the piety stall

While the repository is closed, there is a small selection of cards available in the parish box by the cenotaph.

Donating to the parish on line

The Diocese of Salford has put a donate button on their website, so that you can donate to individual parishes. Click on the link, and type "Stonyhurst" in the parish box, and your donation will end up in our parish bank account. Go to <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/>