

Reflection for the 7th Sunday of Easter

Sunday, 24th May 2020

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

We are living in strange times, uncharted territory. Equally strange is this seventh Sunday of Easter which we celebrate today. Jesus has ascended to his Father, but the Holy Spirit has not yet come down upon the disciples. It's as if we are celebrating a time when God is absent. We know that God is never truly absent. He is at the core of our being, part of everything we do. But Jesus has gone and the Holy Spirit has not yet come. We feel alone.

The role of Mary, the mother of Jesus, during these 10 days is crucial. She gathers the 11 in the upper room and leads them in prayer. But what are they praying for? Jesus has promised to send an Advocate to be a councillor and friend, but they have no idea who he is or what it will be like when he comes. They are praying, but praying in the dark.

When we see pictures of the descent of the Holy Spirit, quite rightly, Mary is depicted with the other disciples. Often she is shown with a tongue of fire on her head. She is receiving the Holy Spirit along with everyone else. I'm not sure if this is what actually happened?

Mary had already received the Holy Spirit when the Angel invited her to be the mother of the Saviour. He came upon her and covered her with his shadow so that what she conceived within herself was through his power. At Pentecost, Mary was the only one with prior experience of the power of the Holy Spirit coming upon them. She did not know how the Spirit would manifest itself, but she knew it would certainly disrupt their lives! Mary was able to keep the disciples together because she had had a first-hand experience of what the Holy Spirit can do. She had done this before.

The absence of Jesus from that upper room was a very powerful reminder of his presence. Again, in art, the Last Supper is always depicted with the disciples gathering around Jesus who sits in the centre. After the Ascension, when they gathered for a meal, I'm sure no one would dare sit in Jesus' place. There would be a vacant space at the table. But the empty space would remind them of Jesus, they would remember the times that he was there, the words he would speak to them, how it felt to be in his presence. The absence of Jesus was a powerful reminder of his presence.

As the disciples try to pray in that upper room, encouraged by Mary, but not really sure of what they are praying for, they would have remembered the words Jesus spoke to them at the Last Supper. The gospel from John today recounts part of what Jesus said to them. In today's extract Jesus tells them that he is praying for *them*. And through them, Jesus is also praying for *us*. We too are the ones who have truly accepted that he has come into the world and that he has come from the Father.

After the Ascension Jesus takes his place in glory at the right hand of the Father, but he is praying for his disciples so that, through their witness, they will be able to join him in glory too. As witnesses to Jesus, we too are destined for a place with him in glory. All along this has been our destiny, but Jesus makes us aware of how, led by the spirit, we will one day be reunited with our risen and ascended Lord.

I think the readings of today have a lot to say to us about where we are at this stage of lockdown, isolating ourselves to help prevent the spread of the virus. Like the disciples we find ourselves confined to our houses. Like them, we have more time for prayer. Like them we are not really sure of what we are praying for. Like them, we can rely on the help and support of Mary. Like the disciples too, when we emerge from the current crisis, we will be changed. The disruptive action of the Holy Spirit means that we can never go back to the way life was before. Perhaps the most important thing for us to pray for is an openness to the Spirit. We don't know how the Spirit will come, but we will know when he *has* come. We will feel it in our bones. When that moment comes let us be ready to respond in love.

St Peter's/St Joseph's Bidding Prayers

23rd / 24th May 2020

Priest:

During this time between the Ascension and Pentecost, like the disciples with Mary, we pray that the promises of Jesus will be fulfilled.

Reader:

Many people are frustrated that they cannot work to support themselves and their families in the normal way: We pray that life will return to normal soon.

Lord in your mercy.

Lockdown continues to be a burden to many: May they be helped and supported by family, neighbours and friends.

Lord in your mercy.

We pray for those working on the front line: Many have put themselves at risk to help others. May they be blessed in the Lord.

Lord in your mercy.

Many parents have been working hard to ensure that the education of their children does not fall behind: May they receive wisdom from the Holy 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: Jesus has gone and prepared a place for them.

Lord in your mercy.

Jesus has ascended to the Father, yet still he listens to us. Let us spend one moment placing our innermost desires before him.

[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:

Jesus is now with the Father. We present our prayers to the one who sits at his right hand for together they are God living forever and ever.

Amen.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

(with St Joseph's, Hurst Green)

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24th May 2020

THE NEWSLETTER

7th 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 23 rd		Nicholson & Wilcock families RIP	Vigil of 7 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
Su 24 th		For the parish	7 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)
M 25 th		Private Intention	Weekday in the Easter Season
T 26 th		Stan Stanley L	St Philip Neri, P
W 27 th		Fr Juan Andres Llauger SJ, L	St Augustine of Canterbury
Th 28 th		David Tones L	Weekday in the Easter Season
F 29 th		Jack & Margaret Shuttleworth A	St Pope Paul VI

(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: Julia Doyle, Gregory Holden, Pat Wilkinson, John Taylor, John Liversedge, Edith Mary Cross, Ann Isobella Wilcock, Edward Dargan, Alfred Burton and Fr Francis Courtney SJ. *May they rest in peace.*

Readings at Mass

	7 th Sunday of Easter (Yr A)	Pentecost Sunday
First	Acts 1; 12 - 14	Acts 2; 1 - 11
Second	I Peter 4; 13 - 16	I Cor 12; 3 - 7, 12 - 13
Gospel	John 17; 1 - 11	John 20; 19 - 23

Diocesan Website:

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

for information on our Diocese and what is happening.

Prayers Please

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr Adolfo Nicholas SJ, (general of the Society of Jesus 2008 – 2016) who died in Tokyo on Wednesday. May he rest in peace.

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



"They joined in continuous prayer with Mary the mother of Jesus".

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 Seventh Sunday of the Easter Season. In the gospel Jesus is praying for his disciples. Through them he prays for us as well. 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. Today is also Communications Sunday where we pray for those who use the media. Each day this week, we can pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Rosary Group

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

Next Sunday

Is Pentecost Sunday. We remember the Holy Spirit coming down upon the apostles and giving them new energy. Next Sunday is the birthday of the Church.

Statistics

Last week 106 people read our newsletter on line. 17 people read the daily reflections and a number of people took copies from the box by the cenotaph!

Book of remembrance and prayer

Many people have sent in names for the 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

It now looks like Masses will not restart until July. Church services come into the same category as bars and restaurants – so phase III. However, Cardinal Nichols is pushing for churches to be open for private prayer. In readiness for this our bishop has suggested that we look for volunteers to be present in churches while they are open. 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/>