

Sixth Sunday of Easter



Prayer of Welcome

O God,
will *you*,
Creator of skies, mountains, and seas,
make your home with *us*?
Wait—we need to vacuum!
And that terrible pile
in the laundry room—
don't look!
You must smile at our excuses.
How easily we forget,
that we are your delight.
You want to be with us.
Please come. The door is open.
Make us your home.
We ask this through the same Christ our
Lord. Amen.

Sunday, May 29, 2011 Dwelling with Us

Today's Readings: Acts 8:5–8, 14–17; 1 Peter 3:15–18; John 14:15–21. Because today's reading from the Last Supper discourse comes so near the end of Jesus' life, it holds a privileged place in the Gospel according to John. Jesus doesn't have much time left. So what he chooses to say must be absolutely central to his message. We, in turn, should hold these words in our hearts.

Here Jesus addresses one of the hardest things in any relationship—that we will someday say a final good-bye as he is saying now. But he promises his disciples (disciples of all times) that he will still be with them, even if they cannot sense his bodily presence. Not only will he remain close to us, but he will draw us closer to the Father. He welcomes us into the intimacy he shares with the Father, promising that

at some point we will understand his words: "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." We are all dwelling in each other. So despite all our failures, God chooses to be close to us, to dwell with us, and that God wants to dwell with us should allay our anxieties about our failures.

From a passage preceding today's reading we know that as Jesus speaks, the Beloved Disciple leans against his chest. John suggests that the only way we can see the world accurately is from that position: leaning on Jesus' heart. John creates a deliberate parallel: just as Jesus knows God's secrets and hears God's heart beat, so we humans can also enjoy that privileged place with Jesus. Thus, our feeble loving is joined to Jesus' all-powerful love to make it wonderfully fruitful.



This Week at Home

Monday, May 30 Saint Joan of Arc

Although Saint Joan of Arc, the patron saint of France, does not appear on the American calendar, she is a fascinating figure. On May 30, 1431, Joan was burned at the stake at the age of 19. As an illiterate peasant, she had heard voices commanding her to restore the Dauphin to the throne of France and drive out the English troops. She inspired soldiers to follow her banner at a time when women were rarely leaders. Captured by the English, she was jailed, interrogated, and condemned as a witch. Joan gives us much to ponder on the way God communicates his will to us, and how we discern his messengers. Today's Readings: Acts 16:11–15; John 15:26—16:4a.

Tuesday, May 31 Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Two women meet, and the older one affirms the goodness of the younger. Such meetings happen at coffee shops today. But today's feast celebrates a special meeting, when Mary, having learned that she will bear the Savior of the world, visits her cousin Elizabeth, herself pregnant at an advanced age with John the Baptist. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, recognizes the presence of "my Lord" in Mary's womb, and calls Mary "blessed." Mary responds with a hymn of praise, the Magnificat. Read this story: Luke 1:46–55. Today's Readings: Zephaniah 3:14–18a; Luke 1:39–56.

Wednesday, June 1 Memorial of Saint Justin, Martyr

Beheaded in Rome in 165, Justin was the first Christian philosopher. He had studied Greek philosophy, and combined Christianity with the best of Plato and Socrates. In today's Gospel, Jesus is promising to send the Spirit of truth "to guide you into all the truth." How can we cultivate a relationship with this Spirit of truth? Today's Readings: Acts 17:15, 22—18:1; John 16:12–15.

Thursday, June 2 If Celebrating the Ascension of the Lord Today:

The Gospel relates Jesus' message to his disciples as he prepares to leave them bodily. He says, essentially: "Go! Don't stare at the skies. There's work to be done! Some haven't heard the good news. I'll be helping you every step of the way." To whom could you give good news—encouragement, attention, the peace of Christ—today? Today's Readings: Acts 1:1–11; Ephesians 1:17–23; Matthew 28:16–20.

If Celebrating the Ascension of the Lord Next Sunday:

Today is the optional memorial of Saint Marcellinus and Saint Peter. These early Christians were martyred in 304 during the persecution of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. They were said to have converted their fellow prisoners and their executioner. Today's Readings: Acts 18:1–8; John 16:16–20.

Friday, June 3 Memorial of Saint Charles Lwanga and his Companions

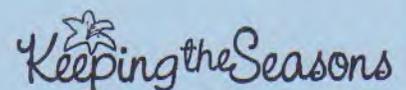
Saint Charles (d. 1886) protected his fellow court pages, ages 13 to 30, from the sexual harassment of King Mwanga in Uganda. When jailed for refusing their ruler, Charles taught them the faith in prison. He was baptized the night before he was executed. The 22 Ugandan martyrs were canonized in 1964. Today's Readings: Acts 18:9–18; John 16:20–23.

Saturday, June 4 New Intimacy with the Father

Today's Gospel offers another nugget from Jesus' rich teaching in his final discourses to his disciples. Because they have loved and believed in him fully, they are now intimately connected to the Father and can address him directly in Jesus' name, for "the Father himself loves you." Today's Readings: Acts 18:23–28; John 16:23b–28.



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 Keeping the Seasons

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