

Homily for the 7th Sunday of Easter, A, May 24th, 2020

This weekend we not only celebrate our final Sunday of Easter but on Monday we also celebrate Memorial Day. This is the day in which we remember all those who sacrificed their lives for our nation. On this Memorial Day we also need to remember all those who have recently died due to the coronavirus. May God bless them all!

One of the traits of human beings is the desire to communicate with one another. We know in America from the days of our Indian ancestors, people used smoke signals to communicate and later used the inventions of the telegraph and telephone to be in contact with one another. Today we have so many new ways to communicate from cell phones to tweets to Facebook, email, voicemail, etc. There is almost a compulsion to do this so we sometimes even see people driving their cars while talking on the phone or even worse texting.

During this shutdown for COVID-19 we are so driven to communicate with loved ones. Would that we be so compulsive in our desire to communicate with God, the God who loves us. Prayer is our way to do this. Think about it, if you do not keep in contact with a loved one or a friend what happens? We drift apart. This also happens in our relationship with God. If we think God is far away, guess who drifted away? It is not God, is it?

How often in the Gospels we see Jesus in prayer. He prays in synagogues, the temple, often in the desert alone, or on mountaintops. Jesus also prays both alone and with others. What Jesus saw as so important for himself in his life, is just as vital and important for us in ours. Jesus even taught us how to pray. He did so in the Lord's Prayer. Jesus even tells us to call God ABBA., literally our dad. Jesus also taught us how not to pray. We are not to pray in public for show or rattle off like the pagans do --

multiplying words -- just ask God for what we need and we shall receive it! To point this out Jesus says: *“What father would give his child a stone when he asked for bread or a snake when he asked for a fish?”* Today we see Jesus in the upper room with his loved ones. He is deep in prayer. His hour has come! The hour of his passion, death, and resurrection. Jesus tells us he is praying for his loved ones, ourselves included. *“I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me because they are yours and everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine. And I have glorified them and now I will be no longer in the world, but they are in the world as I am coming to you.”*

Yes, we do need to pray. We need to pray just as Jesus prayed - both alone and in groups. Why should we pray? We should pray to be able to do the will of the father just as Jesus prayed to be doing the will of his father. We also need to be comforted by God's love and to be able to discern what God's will is for us. To help us to pray Jesus gave us two great gifts: the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Eucharist. *To go back to my earlier analogy -- the Eucharist and the Holy Spirit are the ways we communicate with God. They are like the Wi-Fi services we connect to our cell phones, computers, iPads, and laptops, etc.*

Unfortunately because of our shut down due to the Corona virus, we cannot receive the Eucharist at this time. But perhaps, because we cannot receive the Eucharist, this desire for it, may help us to appreciate it even more.

To conclude -- why do we love to communicate with each other, so much? Isn't it because we do not want to be alone? Of course it is! God knows that. So, remember God is always with us.