

Read

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

LIVING THE WORD

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 22, 2022



REFLECTION

Has anyone ever told you that you have two lungs? You can't touch them or see them. But with every breath, our lungs give us a fresh start. We breathe in the good and breathe out the not-so-good. It's so engrained in the rhythm of life. We don't often think about it.

In the same way, has anyone ever told you that God is alive within you? In every word, in every action, our living God is present. How often do we recognize that? How often do we celebrate that?

It is so easy to get trapped in the busy cycle of school, sports, and other extracurricular activities. We try to handle all these stressors on our own, often forgetting God is journeying with us along every step. We are an incarnational people, which means we live with the reality that our God was born into this world just like all of us. Jesus Christ, the son of God, became human. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and he continues to dwell within us.

This is the gift of Easter. Christ suffered, died and then rose . . . and remains alive within each person baptized into his Body! For this reason, we can trust Jesus when he says to not be troubled; he is with us.

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Are there ways in which your heart is troubled or afraid these days?
- ❖ What is one way you believe God is alive within you?



ACTION

Jesus ascends into heaven, but does not leave this world high-and-dry. He gives us his peace, and the Holy Spirit, to show us the way to God. A concept like *peace* can seem so lofty. Bring it down to earth this week by making a peaceful action. Maybe that means praying for a peaceful end to wars happening around the world, or standing up for a classmate being bullied.



"The LORD God formed the man out of the dust of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

—Genesis 2:7



May 22, 2022

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #57C

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

John 14:23-29

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Love is why Jesus came to us, and it is why he was willing to make his sacrifice on the cross for us. Love is why the Holy Spirit was sent to the Church to guide her. Jesus knew that to love us, we needed to be loved in such a way that our relationship with God could be bridged again, and his love for us, shown on the cross, bridged that divide for us. We show our love to Jesus by listening to his word and living his word. We love Jesus by keeping his commands. How we conduct ourselves matters; how we live the Gospel message matters absolutely to Jesus.

Q FOCUS: We love Jesus by following the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This week, the Church remembers many saints. On May 25, we celebrate St. Bede, St. Gregory VII, and St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi. On May 26, we remember St. Philip Neri, and on May 27 we celebrate St. Augustine of Canterbury. There are many saints on the Church's liturgical calendar that certain cultures have a particular devotion to because of that saint's role in their country or city. For example, Augustine of Canterbury is an important figure in England because he helped bring Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons in the sixth century and establish it as a primary religion there.

Church Teaching Connection

Human dignity is based upon our nature as beings created in love by God. All of our actions are ordered to God's will and following Christ in discipleship. In all our activities we should strive for the greatest treasure of all, the love of God. When we orient ourselves toward Christ and his ways, all of our relationships change and grow. Such an ordering in a person's life is necessary in order to love Jesus. The Second Vatican Council noted that "[h]ere then is the norm for human activity—to harmonize with the authentic interests of the human race, in accordance with God's will and design, and to enable people as individuals and as members of society to pursue and fulfil their total vocation" (*Gaudium et spes*, 35).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 14:23-29

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send

in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Have you ever heard of the love languages? Different people feel loved in different ways. For example, some people feel loved when people give them gifts, and others feel loved when people invest time into the relationship. Humans can express love in many different ways. Parents express love to their children by taking care of them, hugging them, helping them with homework, and teaching them about living life. We show pets our love by feeding them, caring for them, playing with them, and petting them.

► **Think about the ways that you feel most loved? What types of actions make you feel valued and lead to deeper relationships with family and friends? If you feel comfortable sharing, comment on your reflections.**

Now let's consider the alternative. If we have an idea about what types of things make us feel loved and ways to show love to others, what is it like to not be shown love? Pretend for a moment that you really dislike ice cream, and everyone knows your dislike. Now imagine everyone insists that you should love it and be grateful for it. When you arrive at school your best friend hands you an ice cream cone. When

you arrive home, your dad gives you an ice cream sundae. When you visit your grandmother, she tells you there's a surprise in the freezer just for you, and yes, it's ice cream. If all these people know you don't feel loved when they give you the ice cream you dislike so much, how would you feel? What if you responded by saying, "I really don't like ice cream, please stop giving it to me," and people continued to give it to you and insisted that you should feel happy to have it?

► **What is it like to not feel loved by those close to you? How might someone feel if they never had their love returned?**

God loves us so much. He desires that we return this love and love one another, just as he loves us. In the Gospel reading today, we learn about how we are supposed to love Jesus. We love Jesus by keeping his Word. We want to live in Jesus' love. We want Jesus to know our love for him. We want to be Jesus' hands and feet on earth. When we follow in Jesus' footsteps, we are showing our love for him. We may have many ideas about how we can love Jesus, but unless those ideas are in line with the teachings Jesus gave us, we are mistaken in how our actions are loving God.

► **How do our intentions shape our actions? If we do the right things for the wrong reasons, how are we showing or not showing Jesus our love?**

In today's reading, we hear about the Holy Spirit and Jesus promising the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew the Holy Spirit would guide the Church once he ascended into heaven and no longer walked the earth with his disciples. The Holy Spirit guides us to follow Christ and forms our hearts and minds so that we act out of love for God.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 188.

We love Jesus by following his instructions to us.

Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Church.

Our faith is rooted in the action of love.

Act on the Word

Following Jesus Always

For this activity, you will need paper and pens.

Sometimes people assume that only the saints recognized by the Church are holy people. Many people think it's clear that nuns, sisters, brothers, monks or friars, and priests have a clear call to holiness. Those who hold this opinion might also think that the rest of us don't have to be as holy because we are not vowed religious.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Each and every one of us is called to live a holy life dedicated to serving Jesus and living his word. But what does that mean in the modern world? What does living Jesus' word mean to a doctor, a teacher, a mother, or a plumber?

Divide the young people into pairs or small groups and distribute the materials. Instruct each small group to fold their paper into thirds, and select three careers or vocations on the top of each section. These can be careers or vocations in which the teens are interested or not. Under each heading, have the young people write down ways that people in those careers or vocations can live Jesus' word in their work. Remind the teens that living Jesus' word doesn't require preaching with words, but it does require reasonable, responsible, and morally sound action from people each day. Use questions such as the following to help them begin the activity.

- * How can people in this career show honesty?
- * How can they care for the poor?

- * How can they serve God's people?
- * In what ways can they show mercy or service?

After the groups have finished discussing, have them come back together in a large group and ask for volunteers to share highlights from their discussions. Ask them if any career was challenging to find ways to follow God's Word, and ask them which careers were conducive to it. Emphasize that no matter what jobs we choose, we can serve God and follow Jesus' word.

Closing Prayer

*God of peace and promise,
you lead your people
in unity with the Spirit who comforts us.
Strengthen our efforts
to bravely work for peace
in a world of despair and fear
so that all may come to realize
the greatest gift of love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.