

Read

Acts of the Apostles
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 26, 2019



REFLECTION

“Sometimes it helps to think outside the box.” “Step back to take the long view.” “Walk in someone else’s shoes.” Those clichés encourage us to interrupt our narrow thinking so that we can visualize possibilities that we may not have imagined. This type of creativity can lead us to startling discoveries such as understanding a concept we did not yet comprehend or creating a goal for yourself that you did not think possible. And perhaps the most beneficial outcome is empathizing with another person’s journey. As the early disciples spread the faith among Jews and Gentiles, it became clear that they needed to think outside the box when it came to customs, rules, and rituals that needed to be adjusted or be made inclusive of cultural norms. The early Christians adjusted teachings that allowed for the varying groups to follow with confidence that they were included.

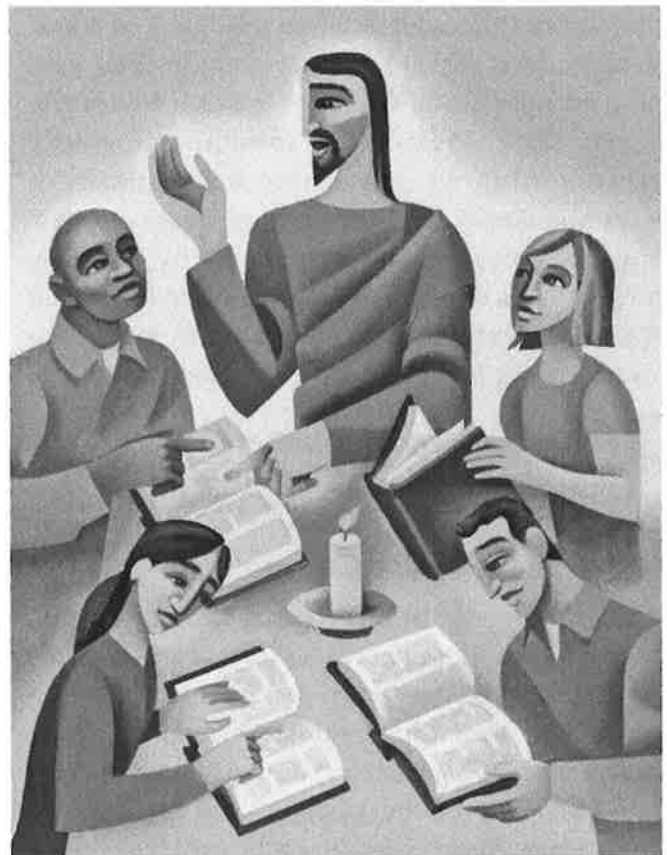
? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What are your core beliefs?
- ❖ What are some ways you could live your faith more out loud?



ACTION

Have you shared your faith with anyone lately? Find an opportunity to share your faith in Jesus Christ. If you hesitate to do this, then consider why you are reluctant to share. Many disciples faced anger, arrest, and even death if they spoke out about their faith and yet they were compelled to go on foot all around the Mediterranean to spread the Good News. Consider how you might evangelize with a friend or family member. You could share a favorite Bible passage or invite them to church with you. Live your faith out loud and you will find that God brings you unexpected joy.





May 26, 2019

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

LECTIONARY #57C

Acts of the Apostles 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

Today's readings are about the establishment of the Church. The Church is guided by the Holy Spirit, unified in the bonds of love, and solidified by peace that is given freely by Jesus to the Apostles who worked to preach to, heal, and build up the Church long after Jesus has died and resurrected. This is all done under the leadership and guidance of Jesus' unending love, which shines brightly in their lives and continues to do so in the current life of the Church. The Lord established something far greater than anything we could ever have imagined. He established a Church built on peace—a new Kingdom grounded in love and led by the Holy Spirit. This is something that should cause great joy and celebration, not fear or dismay, for it is in this peace that Jesus is doing all he came to do.

Q **FOCUS:** *The Lord establishes a Church built on peace and love.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

This Sixth Sunday of Easter marks the beginning of the end of this wonderful season of celebration. The length of Easter (seven full weeks of celebration), illustrates the great significance of the Resurrection. This week on May 31, we will celebrate the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary visits Elizabeth while they were both pregnant. This is a wonderful day indeed, for it shows not only how caring, thoughtful, and

devoted Mary was to anyone in need (in this case, her cousin Elizabeth), but it also shows the great power and strength of God. Elizabeth is old when she conceives John, and Mary is a virgin when she becomes pregnant with the very Son of God. Both women together are an example of the immense power and lavish greatness of God's loving plan to do great things in this world and establish his unending Kingdom.

Church Teaching Connection

"The Church proclaims 'the Gospel of peace' (Ephesians 6:15) and she wishes to cooperate with all national and international authorities in safeguarding this immense universal good. By preaching Jesus Christ, who is himself peace (see Ephesians 2:14), the new evangelization calls on every baptized person to be a peacemaker and a credible witness to a reconciled life" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 239).

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 said the words “Cross my heart and hope to die, stick a needle in my eye”? If so, under what circumstances? If you've never heard them before, what do you think they mean?

These are words often spoken on playgrounds by children who are making a promise that is so intense, so “sacred” in their childlike world, that they are willing to cause themselves pain if they don't uphold their end of the bargain. In a very real way, these are words of covenant, much like what we hear in the Gospel today.

► What does Jesus tell the Apostles they must do in order to show their love for him?

► What does it mean to keep God's word? Is this easy or hard to do? What does Jesus promise to the Apostles if they keep God's word?

Jesus says that by keeping God's word, he will make his dwelling with them. In other words, Jesus will stay with them, be familiar with them, and never abandon them. This is an intense promise, one that comforts the Apostles as they sit and have dinner with their leader for the last time (although they don't necessarily know that yet).

On the other hand, those who do not listen and keep God's word (so those who are unfaithful and disregard the promises from the Father) will be abandoned and not live in God's love. Again, these are serious and harsh words.

► How does Jesus back up all of these claims? Who does Jesus promise will come to assist and guide the Apostles after he is gone?

The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus calls “the Advocate,” is going to further guide and instruct the Apostles in all that they need to know.

► Have you ever had an advocate? Who was that person? What did they do for you to show you that they were on your side?

The Holy Spirit is promised to the Apostles because Jesus knows that they will not be able to handle keeping God's Word without some sort of help. In fact, the Holy Spirit is promised and Jesus solidifies this promise by assuring the Apostles that they should be at peace with what he has said. There is no need for fear, trouble, anxiety, worry, or burden. What Jesus has said is true and will come to pass; they need only trust him and continue to keep his word.

► When was the last time your heart was troubled? What did that feel like? Why were you worried or anxious?

Jesus references anxiety and trouble because he knows that when he is gone—after dying such a brutal death and then miraculously rising from the dead—the Apostles will be confused, perhaps even scared and nervous. So, he reassures them of all the promises he has made. And, to continue backing himself up, Jesus reminds the Apostles that his impending departure is all part of the greater plan. Jesus will return to his Father so they can one day be with him too.

Today's Gospel is no small promise. It is a loaded passage that is reassuring to the Apostles and us, for it is Jesus reminding them (and us) that what he has said is true. He can back his claims up and give us what we need to remain in his word. This plan is ultimately greater than any other we could imagine for ourselves.

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 200.

The Gospel promises peace by way of Christ Jesus. This peace involves living in the love of the Lord by keeping his word.

The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, helps us live in this peace. It is essential that we live in the Word, and rejoice in his promises, if we are to remain in the un failing love we are promised.

Act on the Word

You will need a stopwatch, sheets of paper, notecards, and writing utensils.

Give each teen a piece of paper or a notecard and have them write out things that cause them stress, anxiety, or worry. They have one minute to complete this exercise. After they have completed their list, teens should number them in order from most stressful to least stressful. Divide the teens into groups of about four or five. They should answer these questions in their groups:

► **Why are these things stressful to you? What specifically makes this a stressful aspect of your life?**

► **What are some ways you've tried to cope with or deal with this stress? Has it worked? Why or why not?**

► **When was the last time you prayed about, or asked Jesus to help you with, any of these stressful / anxiety-inducing things?**

Once this discussion has taken place, bring the group to a chapel or turn the space you are in into a place of prayer and peace, and pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet together.

Closing Prayer

The praying of the Divine Mercy Chaplet will end today's session. If you are not familiar with the Divine Mercy Chaplet, visit this website for more information: <http://www.thedivinemercy.org/>.

For the Holyday of Obligation / Sunday

Depending upon your diocese, the Ascension of the Lord may be celebrated on this coming Thursday or Sunday. If it is celebrated on Sunday, the Seventh Sunday of Easter is omitted. Find out from your parish staff when it will occur. To help teens prepare for the Ascension, 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.