

St Pius & St Anthony Homily 6th Sunday Easter Year A1

Jesus tells us in the gospel that He will always be with us (we will not be orphaned-though we may feel alone, we never are-He is with us). And since we are celebrating Mother's Day today, isn't that a kind of a trait our moms have too, that they are ever-present to us. Even though when little, we might not have thought they were right by or with us, they were! And they had eyes on us! A child is never out of reach or out of the heart of his/her mom. So often, don't we see this in groups, as a child is wandering and stretches to the boundary of the playground, alarm bells go off in mom's heart – like moms have an invisible fence electric buzzer in their soul for their kids! And long before Ring Porch or Arlo Cameras vacuumed up every public movement of ours, moms kept kids in their viewfinder! When my brothers and I were little, how many times would we hear mom say, "Yes, you all can go to the park this morning, but remember I will be watching – she had a **network of eyes** -other moms, the corner store manager-the parkkeeper-the whole neighborhood that didn't hesitate to pick that phone up and let her know everything we said or did every time! But moms have that gift (maybe now we call it hovering-okay, but **it is protecting**) to always be close and whether we see them or not, they are influencing us and they have us. I can think of times when mom would have ability to read our minds like when I might walk into the kitchen and ask, "Do you want me to help dry the dishes?" and she knew to say, "What did you do your brother-Go tell him you are sorry." Or how many times, we kids may have thought mom is completely out of the picture, like when we are home alone, and one of us says "Let's make popcorn and a brother pipes in, "But Mom says 'never turn stove on when she is at the store'" Or one of us goes to pulling a popsicle out of the freezer, and somebody intones her voice, "Mom said we can't have any ice cream until after dinner." That could go on and on, like, "Mom said 'Never throw rocks at each other' or 'Don't jump off the roof' or 'Don't hang from the balcony.' So, Moms know and moms are always there. (So, we thank them and honor them today for their mothering love and giving us life!)

I find Jesus saying similarly today in the gospel, that even though others may not see me, you (my disciples) will see me. Jesus tells us, "You know me – I will come to you-I am always with you" And He is. I like how Jesus points out in what kind and several ways that we can continue to 'know' He will be with us. He is so giving to always be at our call and ever faithful at our side to help and save.

For example, next week is Ascension Sunday and Pentecost comes the week following, and I find today's reading a great illustration of how Jesus loves us so much that He wants us to know what is ahead. He prepares us and provides for us by giving us a plan for moving forward. Keep in mind that the past several Sundays' gospels have all come from what we call the 'Last Discourses' of Jesus he taught at the Last Supper in John chapters 14-17. Now, initially He is teaching them how to manage the trauma of his torture and death (Even through that, He will still be with them-Resurrection is coming). But all of His words also apply to His second rising, when He ascends in glory to be seated at right hand of God in heaven. And He tells the apostles prior to this second leaving, that He will be back again - He will always be with them (*that is Pentecost and the Spirit taking up permanent residence among the disciples of Jesus, individually, yes, as each of us are Temples of the Holy Spirit and collectively, too as we the whole body of believers, constitute the Church enlivened/empowered by the Holy Spirit*) But that feast hasn't come just yet. However, I see Jesus' great shepherding of us reflected in how He prepares us for these happenings. It's another way, Jesus takes care of us (He has got us!) He will provide. Even if Jesus goes on, goes ahead of us, He still gave to us all we need to get there too. He said today, "I will not leave you orphaned" Absolutely not, because even if we say He left, notice how much(everything of Himself) He gave us, or He left with us that will convinces us He is just as close as ever, and that we still know Him. Jesus gives us everything. He gave and gave and gave to us, for the purpose of us keeping in touch with Him.

Briefly, what did He give us? First, He gave us His words (*'He said, "Keep my commands- which means my words"*). What are His words? All of His teachings, parables, and His encounters recorded that show His response to every day human interactions. These words we repeat, we read over, and speak to one another to stay in touch with Him. Secondly, He gave us His (Peace) Spirit – On Easter morning (John 20:21-22) when He appeared to apostles in locked room, it said Jesus breathed on them all saying "Receive the Holy Spirit- and use it for the forgiveness of sins" He bathed us in His Spirit and We swim in it (*as St Paul says "We live and move and have our being in Him" Acts 17:28*) Thirdly, Jesus gave us each other as church, calling us together, as brothers and sisters in Him-in Christ, He gave us one another to watch over, support, encourage each other along the Way. Very related to this gift is Jesus' other gift of His own Mother to us as He

hung upon the cross and he looked upon John the Beloved, and announced “Behold Your Mother’ (John 19:27). By our honoring her, He is with us! Don’t you know that in those upper room meetings in Jesus’ absence, the apostles clung to Mary’s presence as the next closest thing until Jesus shows Himself physically again. So, the Blessed Mother is our mother too as Church. And perhaps the greatest way (4th way) Jesus stays in touch with us, is through His giving to us, His own Body and Blood that we celebrate every Sunday, The Holy Eucharist – this sacrament of His Real Presence. Even though the world may not see Him passed through the elements of bread & wine, we do see Him with Faith. He provides for us, feeding us and remaining with us through His abiding presence in the Eucharistic sacrament of His Body and Blood-this Mass. What a shepherd who stays with us in so many ways and gives to us so much: His Word, His Spirit Love, His Mother, One another in Church, and His Own Life-Body & Blood of Eucharist. He said to us, “The world may not see me, but you will see me” (John 14:19) and we do see Him in all of these ways!