

**Proclamation of the Gospel**

The Lord be with you.  
And with your Spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.  
Glory to You, O Lord.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they all saw him, they worshiped Him, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "Full authority has been given to me, both in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

**Homily by Fr. Gerry Hurley**

So, it is Trinity Sunday, the celebration all our Triune God. It comes immediately the Sunday after Pentecost where we celebrated the gift of the Holy Spirit and now we celebrate the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We spent 40 days preparing for the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And then immediately following, we spent 40 days celebrating that event right up to the Ascension. Then, we spent 10 more days celebrating as if the 40 wasn't sufficient. We celebrated in that time the coming gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift that Jesus desires for us most to have.

So what is this feast of the Holy Trinity? It's about our God wanting to be with us always. How beautiful and important that is! That after Jesus ascended to the Father, He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to remind us, to continue to make us aware that He is still with us. He is still bringing about His work in the world. God is with us and made manifest in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. That was the most special gift He chose to give us as He returned to the Father.

How important that gift! Everything we've done these past four years has really been about that gift. All of the ChristLife Series, all of the studies during Lent — the question of "What on earth am I here for?" — all of the reflection has been about that. How are we open to, and how are we receiving that gift that He so desires for us to have — gift of the Holy Spirit.

However, this gift of the Holy Spirit has got to be desired. This gift has got to be sought. This gift of the Spirit has got to be nurtured. God gives the gift freely. But, we've got to work at receiving it. The Spirit is forced upon nobody. But it is made available to every body. Note that — everybody, all of God's people, every person created in His image and likeness, every person created in his world. But, we must claim that gift if we wish

to experience its power in our lives. It's sort of like learning to play the piano, if I don't practice I will never become accomplished. If I don't practice receiving the Holy Spirit again and again and again, then I will never be proficient in that experience of prayer. Because, as we learned last week, it's only in Him that we can proclaim Jesus as Lord.

I had an interesting experience last week. I was at a funeral at St. Jude. A good friend, Freddie Roberts had died and went to the funeral. And so on the way from home from the funeral, I decided I would pop in to visit a lady at the nursing home. So I went to Wisteria. When I got there I couldn't remember her name. But I decided I had my trusty phone, and so I would call the office. I called the office, nothing happened. I called again, nothing happened. It didn't ring in or out, there was no sound. I did a soft reset on my phone and got it going again, and it beeped. I thought Ok it'll work. No. It didn't work again. I tried a third time. And so then I thought well maybe it's just our number at the church. So I decided I would call Teresa Davis, she is the coordinator of the Homebound ministry and she could give me the name. I called Teresa. I called her once, twice, twice three times and nothing happened. So I disconnected from the Bluetooth in my car and I dialed again. Nothing happened. Then I called Lori, whose mother I wanted to visit. I couldn't remember her name because she's not from a parish, but that happens of course at my age — you forget the names of people. Any way, nothing good seemed to happen with my phone. It was a little frustrating at this point. I banged it a few times off of the steering wheel, and then I shook it a few times and tried again, and nothing happened.

Now, this is ya know no flip phone or anything. This is a real phone that I've got. So it was pretty frustrating. This is the X, or the 10, or whatever it is. It is supposed to bring you where you want to go, talk to who you want to talk to. So it was pretty frustrating. I really had a touch of the red ass, ya know? Well maybe more than a touch, ya know, a serious dose. And so I decided the heck with this I'm leaving. So I decided just as I was leaving, I cranked up my car again and I was about to leave, and all of a sudden this thought came into my mind. The thought of this Gospel today — I will be with you always. I will not abandon you. The gift of the Holy Spirit as a reminder that He has not abandoned us. I thought, Oh busted! And, so I was!

As I sat there in my car I thought of the number of people inside of that nursing home who have a special caregiver special carer for themselves, not staff but especially there just for that individual. It totally changed my thoughts. I thought how important is that caregiver in the life of that loved one, that individual. So I came home and I wrote down a few points about the importance all the caregiver

I wrote down number one: sometimes all the caregiver can do for someone who's suffering is just to be present to them. That's it. Nothing more. They might sleep through the period. But just being there is important. How vital that presence is because it provides the one that is suffering with a steady sense of companionship. And how important this companionship. Companionship is what we were made for. We were created in love and created for companionship. Companion comes from two Greek words — it means to have bread, or to break bread, or to share bread with. That's

precisely what the Eucharist is. We come, we break bread with Him, the One who has promised to be with us always. That's Eucharist. Next Sunday we celebrate that gift in a very special way when we celebrate Corpus Christi or the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

To know that there is someone there who cares just makes the world of difference. The carer being there by the bedside of our loved one, how important. It may not ease the sadness or the pain, but it sure can save the one suffering from the feeling of being abandoned. The fear or the feeling of being abandoned has got to be the greatest fear in all the world. I can't think of a greater fear than that, the fear of being totally abandoned. If you can think of a greater fear than that, let me know I cannot think of a greater one. That fear has been known to drive people mad. It's been known to drive people into isolation, and cause them to do terrible things that they would never have done. It's caused people to kill other people, to be destructive of other people, their property, their possessions, their very lives, and sometimes even cause people to take their own lives.

Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, saying to them that He would be with them always. That's all He promised them, simply I will be with you always till the end of time. There were no other assurances, just trust me I will be there. I will be with you always, not sometimes, always. How important is that awareness. But this was by far the most important assurance that He could have given them. He didn't guarantee them a trouble-free life. He didn't guarantee them success. He didn't guarantee them that people would respond, or people would hear, or people would join. He guaranteed them one thing only — His presence. His lasting presence. Somehow they knew that as long as Jesus was with them they could have the courage and strength to face whatever difficulties lay ahead. They would do it. A sense of the presence of Jesus with us doesn't change the world for us, but it sure can give us the courage to face whatever challenges or obstacles or difficulties lie ahead. When we pray we are not asking God to change our world and make life easier for us, although sometimes I do. Maybe you do as well. It seems to be my default. I seem to first say, God please change this, don't let this be. It seems to be the first thing that comes to me sometimes. But in my better self I have begun to realize. I slow it down and I ask Him, what do you want me to learn? What do you want me to see in and through this experience? I ask Him what I really need. To assure me that He will be with me as I face this difficulty, this sickness, this death, this ailment, this obstacle, this adversity. Just to assure me that He will be with me. Then I can face it.

God's closeness shields us against a sense of abandonment and despair. Just as the carer, the sitter, shelters our loved ones from that same fear of abandonment. Down through the ages, the followers of Jesus haven't always behaved as Christians should. There have been bitter quarrels among us with the result that today we have, not one Christian church, but hundreds of Christian churches. And yet in spite of all of our failings, the failings of all of His followers and all of the sins, and all of the many terrible persecutions and the destructive nature of our experience sometimes, the Gospel has

come down to us across 2,000 years. Surely the only explanation for this lies in the promise of Jesus, I will be with you always — always — to the very end of time.

It's great to know that God is always with us. But, we are not always with God. Our busy lives cause us to become disconnected from God. There's no doubt we are extraordinarily busy. The demands on people today has never been so great. We're going here and there. We become human doings, more so than human beings. When we get disconnected from God, an enormous loss occurs in our lives. We need to deliberately and intentionally cultivate a sense of the presence of God and nourish it through prayer in our lives. God is with us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we are with God we are also with one another.

That great teacher, that great theologian, that great jurist, that great philosopher, that great poet, said, "When you are with everyone but me, you are with no one. When you are with no one but me, you are with everyone." Rumi, that great teacher. "When you are with everyone but me, you are with no one. When you are with no one but me, you are with everyone."

Isn't that precisely what we talked about three weeks ago when we talked about St. John's letter — how can we say we love God and do not love our brothers and sisters? Maybe except for those who are in a group, who are in our clique, who are in our organization, or who are like us. How can we say that we love God without loving our brothers and sisters? The Holy Spirit is the gift to enable us to love our brothers and sisters. The sister is such an important person in the lives of our loved ones. The Holy Spirit is is that same power in our lives reminding us that He is still present in our lives, no matter what hardship, no matter what issues visit us, no matter what comes into our lives. What a promise! AT&T can't fulfill that promise. Verizon can't fulfill it. Sprint can't or C-spire. No one else can fulfill that promise to be with us always. If you get a better promise, go ahead and take it. But I can't imagine a better promise than — I will not abandon you. I would be with you always to the end of the world.