



SIXTH SUNDAY OF *Easter*

MAY 17, 2020

Jesus said, “If you love me
you will keep my commandments.”

John 14:15

A TIME OF TRANSITION, INSTABILITY, AND HOPE

Today’s readings describe that period when the apostles are getting used to acting on their own. Acts describes the spreading of the word to Samaria, curing the sick, and their reception of the Holy Spirit. First Peter reminds us that our response to evil must be to do good and to speak of our hope with gentleness and reverence. The psalm is joyous with praise for God and a reminder of God’s saving of those held captive in Egypt long, long ago. John talks not only about the Father and Jesus but also another Advocate, who will remain even when Jesus leaves. The readings also contain the promise of continued love and comfort. The readings today reflect a time of transition, instability, and hope, much like we are experiencing in these days of the pandemic.

WHEN YOU ARE MALIGNED

Each of the readings describes a time of transition and uncertainty. In Acts, the apostles are learning how to respond to those seeking to share in the joy of healing the sick and casting out unclean spirits. In First Peter, the new Christian community is reminded that they will be maligned. Their response to such suffering is shaped by Jesus’ example of gentleness and reverence. The Gospel offers Jesus’ words of consolation to those who are being left behind. All those who had lost Jesus once through crucifixion must prepare to lose him again. But this time they are promised that they will not be abandoned. They are left with the promise that Jesus’ new commandments are the continuing guide to a life that, through death and resurrection, unites those who believe in Jesus, the Father, and the Spirit.

KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS

If keeping Jesus’ commandments is the key to loving him, being loved by the Father, and accompanied by the Spirit, then what choice do we have but to keep his commandments? It seems simple, but unlike the commandments carried down the mountain by Moses, Jesus did not leave us with ten statements of conduct to guide our actions. Jesus left us with a much more complicated commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves. This commandment requires that we first love ourselves as Jesus loved us. We must see in ourselves what Jesus saw in each one of us. Jesus saw that we too are made in the image and likeness of God and that we carry with us the fragility of our humanity. We must see that same Godliness and humanity in every person we encounter. It is not just ourselves we see in the face of our family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers. It is the face of God. We should act accordingly, especially during this pandemic.

TODAY’S READINGS

Acts 8:5–8, 14–17
Psalm 66:1–7, 16, 20
1 Peter 3:15–18
John 14:15–21

