

Sixth Sunday of Easter – May 17, 2020

Acts 2: 5-8, 14-17 – 1 Peter 3: 15-18 – John 14: 15-21

How fitting are the words which we have heard from St. Peter today: “Be willing to give an explanation. . .for a reason for hope.” If there is anything that is to identify a believer in Jesus Christ, a Christian who celebrates the Resurrection of the Lord, especially in these trying and confusing times that we are experiencing, it is hope. To say this in another way: To be a Christian is to be a person of hope in any circumstance.

The reason for this hope is, I believe, is twofold. On the one hand this hope is based on what we recall in this season of the Church’s year. We are currently taking part in the Easter Season, focusing attention on the effect of the rising from the dead by Jesus Christ. Despite the fact that he had experienced betrayal, abandonment, condemnation and execution, Jesus Christ was not defeated, he was not conquered. Nothing, as believers in the Resurrection, can defeat us. Despite whatever way we might be presently affected, we know, in faith, that we cannot be overcome.

On the other hand, the basis of our hope is our conviction, as we heard in a particular way in God’s word to us today, that Christ did not abandon us, but promised to us an abiding presence of God with us in the Holy Spirit. It is this active presence of the Holy Spirit that affects us and gives us hope as well.. What potential, then, does that presence of the

Spirit have in our lives? Again, the Word of God provides us insight.

It is the action of the Holy Spirit that brings about reconciliation of enemies. In what we heard today, Philip went to preach to the Samaritans, those who were constantly at odds with the Jews. But he wins converts so that Peter and John go to be with them. It is the action of the Holy Spirit that allows all of us to be, as was the author of the Psalms, those who recognize and experience the tremendous deeds of God with a graced vision that sees God's presence in everything and everyone around us. It is the action of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, that encourages all believers to live on despite suffering rejection, persecution, loneliness – doing so in a way that expresses and returns love and kindness.

These actions of the Spirit, whose presence we receive in Baptism, are to be a fundamental part of what we are in our lives, whether as Church, as a parish community, or as believing individuals.

It is through Spirit, sent by Jesus, that the faith we profess has a moving, transforming, invigorating effect on us. It is this faith that gives hope. It is because of this faith that we can face the world we know today in a way that seeks to make that world to be better, that seeks to make the lives we live to be better.

What we recall today is that our faith and the confidence and hope that faith instills in us, enables us to do what we can, and do what we must, to reflect and make known in us and in

our actions the presence of our good and gracious God.