

Rev. Derek Fairman

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

We like to spend time with friends and family rather than be alone. Sometimes we can feel near someone even though the person might physically be far away. Well, we might think that after the Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven, the Apostles and the Virgin Mary and the other disciples were alone. However, I would like to think that those days between the Lord Jesus' Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost were days filled with joy and holiness.

In the last two homilies, I spoke about the way that the Lord Jesus intercedes on our behalf. He advocates for us in heaven. That theme continues on this 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter. In the Gospel, the Lord Jesus offers His prayer to His Father. This passage is the first part. Before this, He has spoken to His disciples. He makes this prayer before His death. The Lord offers His prayers for His disciples during their trial. Of course, He will be suffering but His focus is not on Himself. He is focused on His disciples' trials of faith. He prays about what they will go through, that they be strengthened.

The Lord Jesus continues to pray for His disciples now. Even though His disciples now have to face new challenges and need God's help for different situations, there are some things that do not change. The Lord knows that we still need help in this world, that we need help against sin and evil as so many have in the past. The Lord did not offer one prayer for His apostles or one prayer for the disciples who were around at the time. He offered this prayer for all disciples and still offers God prayer for us now.

This can help us understand the way in which we worship God at Mass. We offer God our prayers for our pope, our bishop, all bishops and clergy, all God's people and the whole Church. We offer our prayers for all the deceased members of our parish and our families. Now, these prayers are only part of our Mass, but nevertheless they are an important part. Another important part is that we remember the Mother of God, St. Joseph and all the saints. This is again because our worship on earth is tied to worship in Heaven.

There are some examples in which we can see clearly that the Church worships God here on earth as the Church in Heaven worships God. The idea that the worship we conduct on earth is tied to the Temple in Heaven can be found in the first Eucharistic Prayer. In that prayer, the Church asks the Lord that the Eucharistic gifts be borne by the hands of His holy angel and to be presented in the sight of His divine majesty to His altar on high, that is, in Heaven.

