

*Parishes of  
St Andrew's Cathedral and  
Our Lady of Good Counsel*

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**Sixth Sunday of Eastertide  
17 May 2020**



**Dear Friends and Parishioners,**  
With the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord falling this coming Thursday, the fortieth day after Easter, and bringing Christ's glorification through his passion journey to its completion, the Church begins her annual "Novena" for the Holy Spirit of Pentecost Spirit to come upon us afresh.

As the Lord responds to that nine day prayer with an outpouring of the Spirit. it is given freely and is ever present, but God never forces his Spirit on our free human nature; indeed in my own experience, more and more the Spirit has to be asked for, begged for and called into the heart of the believer.

There is a course a notion of the "**Spirit of the Lord**" in the Old Testament and this is one, which Jesus reworks, fulfils, expands, and perfects. Remember how the Spirit of the Lord comes to the prophets as holiness, as counsel, as a wisdom that God pours forth.

But for St John, the Holy Spirit of which he speaks a number of times in his Gospel is one poured forth by Jesus on his beloved ones and in this Sunday's Gospel, once again, as last Sunday, taken from Christ's farewell teachings on Holy Thursday in the Upper Room, where John introduces his own

particular understanding of the Holy Spirit – with the notion of the Advocate – the Holy Spirit being like a Lawyer, an Advocate, someone who *stands along side you* when you are in need. It is a similar notion as the term Paraclete; a Paraclete is a person called to stand along side when you are in trouble, to help you in court perhaps.

In the court of life, the believer is never alone, the Advocate is there, putting the word into our mouth, filling the heart with the gift of faith. And why should it not be so? Because we are indeed God's work of art. To reassure us that this is so, God gives us the Communion of Saints, humans like ourselves, to show us that sanctity is not only possible but its pursuit brings true happiness.

And at the crown of that Communion of Saints we find Mary, the Lord's mother, that beautiful creature, kept sinless from the moment of her conception for the role she was to be asked to undertake. In simplicity and faith she models the depths of love, commitment and beauty possible for human beings, even in the midst of a world of disbelief and amidst personal sorrows and struggles.

After the Ascension of the Lord which we keep this Thursday, Mary awaits the coming of the Spirit with the Apostles in the Upper Room.



The Pentecost Spirit which comes upon them all is offered afresh to us, through the transforming power of Christ, Mary's Son, in his liturgy in which we are privileged to share. He has indeed not left us orphans; he has given us his Spirit to be our life, his Communion of Saints to be our guide and destiny, and his own Mother to be our mother.

## Ascension Day

They stood and gazed into the summer sky,  
That earnest band of holy men and true:  
It was no vision that might pass them by,  
As the bright clouds enwrapt Him from their view;  
No self-withdrawal of His form still nigh:  
As victory was strange, and hope was new,  
More gloom athwart their hearts this sorrow drew,  
While vainly upward searched each eager eye.

But on their ear those voices' unison  
Broke, as the choir of heaven on men below:  
And, as the portals of the morning, shone  
Their glistening raiment; and though still alone  
We dwell without our Lord, yet this we know,  
That He shall thus return as they beheld Him go.

Henry Alford

### ***On this Thursday of the Ascension we would usually sing:***

New praises be given to Christ newly crowned,  
Who back to His heaven a new way hath found;  
God's blessedness sharing before us He goes,  
what mansions preparing, what endless repose!

His glory still praising on that holy ground,  
the apostles stood gazing, His Mother around;  
with hearts that beat faster, with eyes full of love,  
they watched while their Master ascended above.

[The Acts of the Apostles puts it more bluntly:](#)  
*Why are you men of Galilee standing  
staring into the sky?*

### **For we know too:**

The day of Pentecost will come,  
The day of the Spirit's coming,  
The day for empowering disciples,  
The day for renewing the Church,  
The day to begin our witnessing,  
The first day of the rest of our lives,  
it will come.

At times Lord, I would prefer it didn't arrive,  
so that your Spirit does not disturb,  
nor challenge, nor take me out of myself,  
nor send me into the *culture-shocking* world.

### ***And yet I pray:***

Come down, O love divine,  
Seek thou this soul of mine  
and visit it  
with thine own ardour glowing,  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it –  
thy holy flame bestowing!

**Live stream Mass:** Bishop Stephen Robson shall be the celebrant for the livestream Mass this Sunday at 10.30am from Lawside Convent [www.dunkelddioocese.co.uk](http://www.dunkelddioocese.co.uk)

I will celebrate Sunday Mass in Our Lady of Good Counsel Church; we shall be united in prayer not only for ourselves and our own needs, but for our families, and all those most in need of our intercession – the bereaved, the broken and the vulnerable; those suffering from the virus and other diseases, and all the workers in public services, health and otherwise, all the carers, parents and grandparents, teachers and assistants, postal and delivery workers.

### **Follow the reflections and music during the week on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/StAndrewsRCDundee/>

**Children's Liturgy:** Once again this Sunday there is a resource on the Facebook Page for families who would like to celebrate a Children's Liturgy at home in these different times, as we try to continue to support our young people. A little goodie art bag is being prepared by members of Cathedral Liturgy group, so please do let me know if your child would like one.

I will celebrate the **Evening Prayer of the Church** for the Sixth Sunday of Easter at 4pm in the Cathedral, by the light of the Easter Candle. I'm attaching/enclosing a Word document with the text of the Evening Prayer if you'd like to share in it at home.

The next set of **Day by Day Booklets** have been posted out to those who have requested them. I'm aware the post is a bit erratic at present. There are extras copies, so please do give me an email or a call if you would like one.

**Your Offertory Contributions** during this time are especially appreciated – either through cash, cheque or standing order.

### **Our Prayers for those who have died recently:**

Veronica Sreenan, Ian McInrue, Jean Duffy, Jamie Clark, Sheila Hoskins, Frank Holligan; and a special remembrance of Anakin Forbes, who has died just short of his third birthday, our prayers for him and his grieving family.

**those whose anniversaries fall at this time:** Cathie Duffy, Mary Duffy, May Hendry, Jock Drumm, Tom Flynn, Denis Naulty, Joseph Logan, Helen Devine, Frank M Zwolinski;

**all those who are sick:** Sharon McNally, Moira Wilkie, Natalia Lucka, Benedict Connery, Benedict Stephens, Gillian Steedman, Steven Kennedy, Sharon Davison, Aubrey McMullan, Sonya Rostan, Lily Jane Douglas, Alexander McNeil, Bridie Mossey, Sheila McCallum, Marie Manunga, Estelle Fox, Allison Matthew.

## *Keeping the Sixth Sunday of Easter holy with a Home Liturgy*

### **A prayer to begin**

God our Father, maker of all,  
the crown of your creation  
was the Son of Man, born of a woman  
but without beginning.  
He suffered for us. but lives for ever.  
May our mortal lives be crowned  
with the ultimate joy of rising with him,  
who is Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Read the Scriptures of the day**

**Acts of the Apostles 8:5-8; 14-17**

*The conversion of the Samaritans .*

**Psalm 65:**

*Cry out with joy to God, all the earth*

**1 Peter 3:15-18:** *Reverence the Lord  
Christ in your hearts.*

**Alleluia**

**Gospel of John 14:1-12:**

*The promise of the Advocate.*

### **For reflection**

“Reverence” is the first word of this Sunday’s second reading. “Reverence the Lord Christ in your heart”, says St Peter. How do I reverence the Lord Christ? The reverence he is due is surely the reverence of love; that when we speak to him in prayer we speak from the heart, that when we sing to him we sing willingly from the heart, because he has put his *song* into our lives, by making us in his own image and likeness and breathing his Spirit into us.

Think about it: The human artist creates his masterpiece from clay or stone or paint on canvas; he models the clay with his hands, he shapes the stone with his chisel, he colours the canvas with his paints; the different elements responding in their own fashion to his making. But it is a passive response. When God creates his masterpieces and human beings are his clay there is this great difference: the craft of his handiwork, the human being, is not malleable like metal, not flat like the canvas, but alive and free. Our response to God is faith. This is how we can be continually formed in God’s image and continually become his work of art.

Now of course, Christ is God’s perfect image. The writer to the Hebrews calls him the radiant light of God’s glory and the perfect copy of his nature. Jesus Christ, we might say, is the *blueprint* of all those who are called to be sons and daughters of God – ourselves included. He is our blueprint, our pattern, our prototype, our model. He is the mould of the new creation and he continually promises that his Spirit, his Advocate will be with us..

### **Intercessions**

Let us pray for all those are involved in the outreach and missionary work of the Church; May the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, be with them.

Let us pray for those whose bodies, minds or emotions are broken by sickness and struggle; for the conversion of those who act or speak only by violence of deed or word, and for those who are damaged by the forces of evil present in the world; that God’s values of goodness and purity, given through his grace, may imbue our society and its people, to liberate them from all that is evil.

Let us express gratefulness to God for the friendships in our lives, through which God continues to speak to us; and that wherever there is hurt there may now be healing, wherever there is estrangement there may now be reconciliation.

Take time to voice your own prayers then sum up with the **Our Father....**

### **A prayer to close**

You have redeemed us O God,  
in Christ your Son,  
who was put to death in the flesh,  
but made alive again in the Spirit.  
In answer to Christ’s priestly prayer,  
give us once more that Advocate,  
to be with us always, the Spirit of truth,  
so that in the joy that comes from you,  
we may always be ready  
to give a reason  
for the hope that is within us. Amen.

## *Keeping the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord with a Home Liturgy*



### **A prayer to begin**

Eternal Father,  
our minds were prepared  
for the coming of your Kingdom  
when you took Christ beyond our sight,  
so that we might seek him in his glory.  
May we follow where he has led  
and find our hope in his glory,  
for he is Lord for ever and ever. Amen

### **Read the Scriptures of the day**

#### **Acts of the Apostles 1: 1-11**

*He was lifted up as they looked on.*

#### **Psalm 46:**

*God goes up with shouts of joy,  
the Lord ascends with trumpet blast!*

#### **St Paul to the Ephesians 1:17-23:**

*Seated at the Father's right hand in heaven  
Alleluia*

#### **Gospel of Matthew 28:16-20:**

*Go, make disciples of all nations.*

### **For reflection**

I hope you really *enjoy* the scripture readings for this Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension. I love the way in which St Luke both closes his Gospel and opens his Acts of the Apostles with the account of Christ's ascension, making of it both a climactic moment for the Risen Lord and the starting point for the young Church to earnestly and purposefully await the coming of the Holy Spirit, in whose power they will burst forth onto the world stage.

In the first reading, Luke describes the Ascension of Christ by recalling the image of the cloud, a motif found in the Old Testament to signify God's presence. When Israel went out of Egypt, the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud. When Moses climbed Mount Sinai to stand before God, the Lord descended in a cloud.

The Psalms, too, like Psalm 46 which we sing today, foretells the Ascension: "the Lord goes up with trumpet blast".

The Ascension reveals Christ's divinity in his return to Father. In the Second Reading, there is no doubt that he is now at the Father's right hand and St Paul prays that the Spirit will help us grasp this mystery, and "enlighten the eyes of our mind". His earthly ministry is accomplished and complete. He has ascended to the Father in heaven and has opened the way for us to follow him. Meanwhile, he is with us also, "to the end of time" as we read in Matthew's Gospel. We are not alone.

I love the words (and music) of this Ascension Day hymn by Father Francis Duffy:

**He mounts the heavens, triumphing, Alleluia;  
Our Lord and Saviour, glorious King, Alleluia.  
He sitteth at the Father's right, Alleluia:  
and ruleth heaven and earth with might, Alleluia!**

**And thus King David's wondrous psalm, Alleluia,  
hath ended in the conquering Lamb, Alleluia.  
My Lord now reigneth with the Lord, Alleluia,  
upon the Father's throne adored, Alleluia!**

### **Intercessions**

Take time to voice your own prayers then sum up with the **Our Father....**

### **A prayer to close**

You have glorified our Lord Jesus Christ,  
O God, exalting to your right hand  
the Son who emptied himself for us  
even to death on the cross.

You have exalted all of us, as we have been  
baptised into Christ's dying and rising.

Clothe us with the Holy Spirit,  
the "power from on high",

so that with our minds and hearts enlightened  
we may come to understand the immeasurable  
greatness of your power at work in us  
who believe and, in that strength, go,  
to make disciples of all nations. Amen.