May 6, 2018

From Fr. Jim . . .

Next Sunday is the Feast of the Ascension: Some of you may remember that we used to celebrate this Feast on the Thursday before the Seventh Sunday of Easter as a Holy Day of Obligation. A number of years ago, the Bishops decided that this Feast could be moved to the Seventh Sunday of Easter. This allows more of the faithful to celebrate this feast as part of one's Sunday obligation and it also keeps the Feast connected to the one event of Jesus' dying, rising, the descent of the Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost and his Ascension into heaven. It reinforces our belief that if we die with the Lord, we too will rise with him and our bodies eventually will, too. We are truly an Easter people and Alleluia is our song. What signs of this promise from God to us are we able to see now as we journey through this world to the next one? How is God lifting us up, raising us up over sin and death now? From what are we able to ascend now? Does keeping our minds and hearts focused on the "higher things" help us realize this promise now?

Another Advocate, the Holy Spirit is coming who will teach us everything and remind us of everything that Jesus has taught us. Traditionally from the Thursday before The Seventh Sunday of Easter (The Feast of the Ascension) until Pentecost Sunday, Christians prayed a novena to the Holy Spirit in preparation for the Feast of Pentecost, inviting the Spirit to enter our hearts and create us anew. Can we pray for our parish and the church throughout the world asking for understanding, right counsel, and peace and to be set on fire with all of the Spirit's virtues to live and proclaim God's merciful love? Next week, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism with infants and some adults. The adults will also receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

"Come Holy Spirit, come. Fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit so that we may be created and you may renew the face of the earth!" Amen. Alleluia!