



Homily for  
THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER  
SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD  
7/8 May, 2016

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**Fr. Dwayne's homily follows....**

*"May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,  
give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him."*

I. While teaching has many rewards, one of the heartaches is working with, and seeing students, who are gifted in many ways, who are filled with all sorts of potential, and they either a) don't recognize it within themselves or b) don't bother, don't care to, develop that potential. I want to go to them and say, "Don't you see what you have and who you are? Don't you care to reach for the stars and be the best person you can be?"

Throughout the course of four years of high school, one can easily see those students who work hard, get involved in lots of activities, make their mark on one or another event. And then there are those who graduate without ever having gone to a play or a concert, who were not involved in any extracurricular activity – and maybe never even went to an athletic event.

As a teacher it was just heartbreaking.

II. But it is a pattern certainly repeated in adult life and in the Christian life. Within the sacramental life of the Church, we see that happening so often....

- parents who don't bother to have their children baptized...
- young couples who do not understand what they are doing when they do not celebrate marriage as a sacrament
- youth who do not appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit at confirmation
- adult children who do not have a funeral service or a funeral Mass for their parents who were life-long, faithful Catholics. Don't they want the prayers of the Church backing up their parents? Don't they love their parents enough to give them a funeral Mass?
- and so many of us not truly feeling the hope of the promise of eternal life for all those who are disciples of Jesus. We live as though heaven (or hell) are not important. We don't seem to give much thought or care to this. It seems we are just content with the mundane, with the ordinary, just what is right in front of us.

III. The author of Ephesians prays that fellow disciples will recognize all that has been to them...that they are given a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of Jesus.

Paul – or the person writing in his name – prays:

- may the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call
- that they know the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones and
- what is the surpassing greatness of his power for those who believe

The verb forms in this section indicate that these things have already taken place –

they are *already* present – and not something for the future. Just as I saw in my students that they already possess many gifts: all they need to do is wake up and use them!

IV. The Ascension of Jesus into heaven is intended to lift us up as well – lift us up and recognize what Jesus has done for us – and what gifts have already been given to us as his disciples.

As Jesus' disciples it should be evident to those around us that we do recognize in how many ways we have been blessed:

- we do care for eternal life. We do want to live as faithful disciples of Jesus so that we will one day share in the life of Christ eternally.
- this means we do not *abandon* our loved ones at death, but we *accompany* them through this transition with our prayers and the prayers and rituals of the Church
- it means we love our children enough that we will unite them to Christ through the sacrament of baptism: it means we want them to come to know and love Jesus
- as Jesus' disciples we embrace the sacramental life – especially celebrating the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist on a consistent, regular basis. We do that because we want to be nourished and strengthened by God's mercy and love in our hearts.

V. In all these – and many *more* ways – we give witness to the life and the power of Christ living within us. It should be evident to those around us that we Christians have a different mindset – a different way of approaching life: our vision is not narrow and focused only on the present moment and the most immediate need, but it is broad and uplifting – filled with hope and expressed in joy.

“May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened,

that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe...”

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### **Fr. Kyle’s homily follows....**

If you’re anything like me, then you love to watch infomercials. It is so exciting to hear some overly excited narrator or host talk about some great product that you can’t live without. The narrator explains all the amazing functions and features and then says, “but wait, there’s more!”.

While Jesus is nothing like an infomercial host, he is always calling us to discover more. Today we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord into heaven. But before he goes back to his Heavenly Father Jesus tells his disciples, “but wait, there’s more”. You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit. This call to something more is what God has done in our lives through the sacraments that we receive. And we don’t even need to make 4 easy payments of \$9.95 to get it the power of the Holy Spirit.

We can see the same thing in the gift of the sacraments in our life. In baptism we were given the power of the Holy Spirit and made beloved sons and daughters of Jesus. *But wait, there’s more!* He gives us the his Body and Blood in the Eucharist so that we might be strengthened to love as he loved; to even be willing to sacrifice and suffer out of love for those around us. *But wait, there’s more!* He gives us forgiveness in reconciliation and wipes away our sins when we have messed up. *But wait, there’s more!* In confirmation He has sealed us with the Holy Spirit to be witnesses of Jesus. Jesus says in today’s gospel, “you are witnesses of these things”. The root word in Greek for witness is the same word for martyr. And so our confirmation is not just being an adult in the Church like some Catholic Bar Mitzvat. It is God giving us the strength to be martyrs for our faith. The be willing to be persecuted for what we believe; to be willing to sacrifice in order to preach Jesus in our life, to even be willing to die

for our faith. When Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, he didn't just say, "it's been great guys, see ya later". He said, wait, there's more. You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit.

So what do we do with this grace from the sacraments? How do we use the power of the Holy Spirit with which we have been clothed? Do we treat it like an infomercial produce? I remember in college buying a power blender. My roommate and I used it every day for a week; after that it basically just sat in the corner of the kitchen never to be used again. Do we take full advantage of the gift of the sacraments; to receive Jesus in the Eucharist as often as possible; to receive God's forgiveness in reconciliation; to have the courage to be persecuted for our faith and to witness to the love of Christ. As we prepare to receive Jesus in the sacrament of the Eucharist, may we resolve not to waste this great gift, but instead to answer God's call to be better, to be more.