

May 24, 2020 - Seventh Sunday of Easter – Cycle A
Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning - again and how are you? Blessed.

The first reading talked about what the apostles did after Jesus ascended into heaven. Now, some of you are celebrating the Feast of the Ascension. We already celebrated that on Thursday. But, what they did was they came together, they prayed, and they prayed with Mary, the Mother of Jesus. So, this is to teach us something. The early church needs to teach us something.

The first thing it teaches us is that we need to come together to pray. And that's why this is not the ideal thing. We are coming together spiritually, and we are coming together from all over the world, but it's the way God created us is not to be a lone ranger, but to be with each other. There is no lone rangers in Christianity. When you go to heaven, God willing, you are not going to sit there forever and go there and just look at God – I'm sorry, you are going to be with all the people who are in heaven with you. You know, that's why it's called the Communion of Saints. You know, those who go to hell are the people who are alone forever. There is no such thing as the communion of the damned. You know, it's just they're alone. Teresa of Avila experienced her own place and she was alone forever in hell. Right, that's what converted her. But we need to know that we are going to be together forever and ever and ever. Again, I've told you the story that once my Mother said "if that person is in heaven, then I don't want to be there". And I said "don't worry, Mother, you won't" Oh, to my own Mother, with all her struggles. This was years ago, before she.... Nowadays, I wouldn't say that to her, normally.

Anyway, the reality is: we are called to be together. And we need, as we come together, that's where we care of each other's needs. This past week, a friend of mine, Sean Forrest, some of you might know him, he's a speaker, bigger than I am, great guy. He called me stressed. He even sent me a video and he was beyond stressed. And I said, don't be stressed. You got to trust God with everything. Because he has an orphanage and a place taking care of people down in Haiti, called Haiti180.com. And he said, Father, you got to help me. We need at least another 800 people to sign up for our monthly \$15 per month giving or we are not going to be able to feed these kids. Father, I'm stressed. And I said, that's why God gave us each other. Together, we can take care of each other's needs. My brothers and sisters in Haiti or in Europe or Africa, they are my brothers and sisters, they are your brothers and sisters. And that's why it's important for all of us, that we come together and we work for the poor and we help out people who will never be able to pay us back. We just don't take care of our own around us because our own is God's own, and that's everyone in the world. So I would encourage you –that if you don't have a place where you consistently take care of the poor - that you help Shaun out. That you go to Haiti180.com and you sign up for \$15.00 per month. Think about that. That's one cup of coffee a week for some of you. But again, we come together and we don't just do that for those type things. We do that in our own parishes. Like here, to join my parish, you don't just come up and join. You need to go through three classes. And I teach all three classes. And the first class is "what does it mean for Jesus to be Lord". The second class is "what does it mean to serve" and the third class is "what does it mean to worship". Usually the worship class is second and the last one is "what does it mean to serve". And I tell my people, and those of you who are my people know it, there are no takers in Christianity. Everybody must sit there and give and do at least one thing for the parish a year. If not, then you are a taker. And there are no takers. We come together, we work together – that's what God did. He established a church for us to come together as community. That's what they did after the Ascension – they came together as a community. And not only

did they take care of each other's needs, but they prayed with each other. We need to pray with each other. Especially with your family. Does your family have time of prayer? Where every night, you know, I heard a great nun talk about her sister and brother – they have six kids, and every night, before they go to bed, all the kids come to the bedroom and they all share with each other. So, the parents ask the kids, "What did God do for you good today, Where was God in your life today"? And then they ask, "What do you want to pray for"? And so every night, this family comes together and prays. Do you come together as a family to pray? Could be a rosary, could be a decade of the rosary. But, if you want to go deeper, after that, you have time for conversation: where did you see Jesus working in your life today? What would you like us to pray for today? That could be a great thing – together, that's what God calls us to be.

The second thing – that part of the prayer – we got to pray together.

But now, the third thing is we got to do it with Mary. Isn't that amazing? That they made it explicit in the Acts of the Apostles that they prayed together with Mary, the mother of Jesus. And we, too, need our Mother. And we pray with her. If you want stuff to go to the next level, you go to Mary. What do you think Jesus did when he was a little boy? He went to his mother. If Jesus could do that, so can we. Mary never takes the place of Jesus. She always leads us to Jesus. And again, if you are here from the parish, you know that, on the side of the church, we have a beautiful thing of Pentecost. And in the center of that is Mary. If you want power in your life, you go to Mary and you pray with her, and Mary, and again, what we do when we pray with saints, is we are saying they is that they are alive, because of Jesus, and they are still connected - it's the communion of saints. That we are together forever, and when they leave us from this earth, we are still together. That's your mother, your father, who has passed away, anyone who's in heaven, they are still in union with us. When we receive communion, it's not just communion with Jesus, it's communion with all the angels and saints. And so, if Jesus could go to his mother, and she taught him how to pray in his humanity, she can pray with us and teach us how to pray, and especially in this time of the novena to the Holy Spirit Go to Mary and don't be afraid. She's your mother. The last gift that Jesus gave you from the cross. Behold your mother. And you go to your mother for all kinds of things. Go to Mary and ask her to pray with you, to pray for you. So, together, the Acts teach us something. We need to come together. We need each other. When we come together, we need to pray with each other. And we need to have our mother to pray with us and for us.

Got it? Get it? Gonna do it?

May each of you know his love, now and forever, Amen.