



ADVOCATE FOR TRUTH homily by Fr. Michael J. Nicosia
for Easter 6 with Mary of Magdala ECC

“...they had ONLY been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Why wasn't that enough?

Why is the Spirit necessary for the life of the Church?

Philip had proclaimed the Christ to the Samaritans
and they were led to God.

How was that relationship lacking before their baptism in the Holy Spirit?

Given the impact of their relationship with Christ
evidenced in their liberation, their joy,
in what way was their faith incomplete?
Was it?

Surely if they loved Jesus and kept his commandments,
the door was open to the life he promised.
And if, as we maintain, Jesus has already said the word
and we have been healed and made whole and holy,
why would we need an Advocate to defend us?

Maybe the answer lies in the Advocate's other descriptive:
“the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept.”

True, the Holy Spirit advocates on our behalf,
with sighs and groans unintelligible,
expressing what we need beyond anything we could ever articulate for ourselves.
But what if She is also Jesus' Advocate,
making us more receptive to truth?

Caught in the maelstrom of debate, denial and disbelief in the current pandemic,
if ever we needed an Advocate for Truth it's now.

Oh, I could rant all day with the prophet Jeremiah who pointed out in his day,
“They bend their tongue like a bow;
by falsehood and not truth they grow strong in the land;
they proceed from evil to evil,
for they do not know me, says the LORD” (9:3).

I am more infuriated by the day
by the latest acts of defiance and aggression.

Armed protestors on the streets, in stores and even in legislative buildings,
convinced that Stay At Home orders are an example of government over-reach

—“Next they’ll be taking away our guns.”

Some have acted out their insecurities in the extreme;
more than one person has been killed for daring to challenge them
for not wearing a face mask in public.

On Mother’s Day we saw throngs of people patronizing a restaurant in Castle Rock,
an act of civil disobedience against State mandates.

Ordered to cease and desist, they still maintain they’re in the right:
“This is America and God will protect us.”

Certainly I wouldn’t accuse them of evil intent;
but I can’t ignore that there’s a disconnect.
Their perception of reality is totally different from mine,
and the question before all of us is
how do we civilly interact with each other
and get through this crisis together?

Sure we can be ever ready to reply,
gently and respectfully sharing out of our experience,
but we have to acknowledge that
any articulation of our wants and desires
can fall short of what we actually need.

And, taking into account the fact that
our realities are founded on the often biased information we take in,
it’s incredibly difficult to know what is true and what isn’t nowadays.

...maybe it’s always been a challenge.
Our Teacher for all ages, Jesus said,
“the reason I was born and came into the world
is to testify to the truth.
Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

Like the Psalmist we’ve chosen to listen and learn from him,
and yet still we’re asking, “What is truth?”
So we’re back to our need for an Advocate
who can make us more receptive to it / to him.

In today’s gospel, he says,
“On that day [when you receive the Spirit of truth]
you will know that I am in God, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

Maybe that’s the heart of his teaching,
the heart of our truth—
our communion with him and with each other.

In this time of being church together virtually,
we’re grappling with so many challenges—frustrating to everyone
(at least we have that in common with the obstinate protesters).

So we grieve our losses and creatively shift gears and focus
to see how the Spirit is moving in our lives in the new now.

9News anchor Kyle Clark asked folks
to tweet in what things they'd like to keep doing
once we're somewhat "back to normal."

One of those things for us
is how we've grown to appreciate our interconnectedness, our oneness in Christ.
Maybe that's the experienced reality we need to share with others

May the truth of our oneness
shape the new normal for everyone.

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/051720.cfm>