

**From:** Julie Greer  
**Sent:** Monday, May 18, 2020 4:00 PM  
**To:** Julie Greer  
**Cc:** mlumpe@pcj.edu  
**Subject:** Update to Priests - May 18  
**Attachments:** Dominican Homily Help May 31, Pentecost.docx; Dominican Homily Help June 7, Holy Trinity Sunday.docx; Dominican Homily Help June 14, Corpus Christi.docx; Dominican Homily Help June 21, Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx; Dominican Homily Help June 28, Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx; Dominican Homily Help July 5, Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx

Fathers:

Inquiries have come in about elementary school graduations. During our ZOOM conversation last week I said that one would need to check in with the Education Office as they are working with the State Education Office, but that I couldn't imagine that elementary schools would not be subject to the same limitations as the high schools. In fact, that is the case. The Office of Catholic Schools is strongly recommending that elementary school graduations follow the approach of the high schools, maintaining consistency across the Diocese. The Ohio Department of Education has put out parameters for graduations that should be viewed as applicable to high schools and elementary schools. I did suggest that Live-streaming Graduations and using photos of the graduates with tributes to them could be an example of a creative approach (keeping in mind the child protection guidelines). It is regrettable that we are in this situation. However, these measures are necessary to maintain the health and safety of all people concerned. Principals should be in regular contact with their pastors and with School Office.

Last week we sent homily helps from the Dominican Friars. Attached are 6 more for upcoming weeks. We thank the Dominicans for thinking of us.

Fraternally,  
+Bishop Brennan

## **Dominican homily help: May 31, 2020, Pentecost**

Fr. Thomas Blau, O.P.

### **Possible Themes:**

1. From all three readings: The Unity of the Church is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The confusion and division caused at Babel are undone. In the church we find a unity in Belief, in worship, in moral life, and in mission that is the evidence of the Spirit among us. The Body of Christ unifies us by the power of the Spirit. Everyone has a place as adopted sons and daughters of God. Everyone is needed in the Body of Christ.

2. Examples of the power of the Spirit that Jesus gives us. Various themes:

The 7 Gifts operative in our lives. Give personal examples of how you have seen these.  
The Infused moral virtues operative.  
Our being sons and daughters in the family of God by the Spirit.  
The Unity we have is something that the world can only dream of.

3. The Holy Spirit “by the numbers” - Truths associated with numbers in order.

1 God – 3 Coequal Persons in 1 Divine Nature  
2 fold procession from the Father and the Son.  
3 Theological Virtues given by the Spirit: Faith, Hope and Charity  
4 Infused moral virtues: Prudence Justice Temperance, Fortitude.  
5 statements about the Spirit are found in the Nicene Creed: Lord, Giver...,  
7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit  
12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

4. Themes that might help with “Coronatide”.

a. The Spirit gives us the strength to endure with God: Infused moral virtue of Fortitude – courage in trusting God during this time. Same Spirit that inspired courage in Jesus on Good Friday.

b. The Unity of the Church is capable because of the Spirit even more than the Internet.

c. This is the moment to exercise the Charity that the Spirit gives us: Spiritual and Corporal works of mercy. Especially “visiting the imprisoned” by make a phone call to connect with the homebound, the anxious, the panicking.

5. Lastly, if you want to use the Catechism I suggest consulting these paragraphs – whichever one interests you.

CCC 696, 276, 731-732, 737-741, 830, 1076, 1287, 2623 on Pentecost

CCC. 599, 597, 674, 715 on the apostolic witness of Pentecost

CCC 1152, 1226, 1302, 1556, on the mystery of Pentecost that is continuing in the Church

CCC. 767, 775, 798, 796, 813, 1097, 1108-1109 on the Church as communion in the Spirit.

## **MAY 31 2020 PENTECOST -MASS DURING THE DAY**

### **Mass during the Day**

#### **Reading 1**

**ACTS 2:1-11**

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

#### **Responsorial Psalm**

**PS 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34**

R. (cf. 30) **Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

or:

R. **Alleluia.**

**Insights in this column are next to the verses from where I drew the insight.**

Driving wind- like the wind that was active in Genesis when the world was created. Recreating the earth.

Confused – Just like the Tower of Babel.

But by the Spirit the confusion is undone! The unity of the church is shown.

The Church is made from many cultures, nations, languages.

Renewal: the unity created by the Holy Spirit.

Theme: The Creedal Statement of "One" could be the topic. The Church has a unity which no human power/law could ever make.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!  
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!  
How manifold are your works, O Lord!  
the earth is full of your creatures;  
**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

or:

**R. Alleluia.**

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may  
the LORD be glad in his works!  
Pleasing to him be my theme;  
I will be glad in the LORD.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

or:

**R. Alleluia.**

If you take away their breath, they perish  
and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created,  
and you renew the face of the earth.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

or:

**R. Alleluia.**

## **Reading 2**

**1 COR 12:3B-7, 12-13**

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

## **Sequence**

Veni, Sancte Spiritus  
Come, Holy Spirit, come!  
And from your celestial home  
Shed a ray of light divine!  
Come, Father of the poor!  
Come, source of all our store!  
Come, within our bosoms shine.  
You, of comforters the best;  
You, the soul's most welcome guest;

The Spirit is given for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The unity of the Church: many members who are one.

Theme: unity in Faith, Doctrine, Worship, Mission and Morals.

Many titles of the Holy Spirit are found in the Sequence!

Sweet refreshment here below;  
In our labor, rest most sweet;  
Grateful coolness in the heat;  
Solace in the midst of woe.  
O most blessed Light divine,  
Shine within these hearts of yours,  
And our inmost being fill!  
Where you are not, we have naught,  
Nothing good in deed or thought,  
Nothing free from taint of ill.  
Heal our wounds, our strength renew;  
On our dryness pour your dew;  
Wash the stains of guilt away:  
Bend the stubborn heart and will;  
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;  
Guide the steps that go astray.  
On the faithful, who adore  
And confess you, evermore  
In your sevenfold gift descend;  
Give them virtue's sure reward;  
Give them your salvation, Lord;  
Give them joys that never end. Amen.  
Alleluia.

**Alleluia**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel**

**JN 20:19-23**

On the evening of that first day of the week,  
when the doors were locked, where the disciples  
were,  
for fear of the Jews,  
Jesus came and stood in their midst  
and said to them, "Peace be with you."  
When he had said this, he showed them his hands  
and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw  
the Lord.  
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.  
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."  
And when he had said this, he breathed on them  
and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.  
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,  
and whose sins you retain are retained."

7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The Peace of Jesus given to the Church: what does  
peace mean in these troubled times? How can we  
live in the peace that Jesus has won for us?

Jesus equips the Apostles. He does for us also.  
Institution of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

**Dominican Homily Help: June 7, 2020, Holy Trinity Sunday**  
Fr. Thomas Blau, O.P.

**Here are various ideas for homilies on Trinity Sunday:**

1. Themes based on the readings:

- a. As God revealed himself to Moses, so to a greater extent Jesus reveals the interior truth re: our God. He is a Trinity of Persons.
- b. The titles of God, Father, Son and Spirit are not mere attempts to identify Him, but revealed names given to us by Jesus. They are definitive and should not be changed for something that is more socially or culturally comfortable.
- c. We worship God as He truly is: the Holy Trinity.

2. Importance of this revelation to us.

- a. We often live the principle: “you cannot give what you do not receive.” Our relationships are important – in fact love is mandated because at the “heart” of God is a relationship, not a monad in the sky. Therefore, the stress on relationships found within Christianity is not merely a command from an Authority, but is a reflection of the relations at the Heart of the Trinity. This is the reason why Christians are required to forgive, to show mercy and kindness to both members of the Church AND to those who are not members – because “relationality” is at the heart of our God. We must live that out.

3. There are some images that reflect “triad” relationships of “3 distinctions in one nature”. While some priests [a few Dominicans! and Lutherans!] do not use them because “analogies fail,” I have given them in the past. If you do use triadic imagery [you are in good company!] the key is to give many of them, not just one while avoiding polytheism [“many kinds of fruit at the market, but it’s all fruit”] and modalism [“3 phases of water that we see at different times”] are to be avoided. Any one of them “limps” and we should admit that. However, saints did in fact use analogies to approximate teachings. I also specifically mention the Modalist triad of three states of H<sub>2</sub>O to distinguish what we are NOT saying. To the saints:

St. Patrick using the clover shows us that it’s possible to use an image successfully. Here are other examples of saints using imagery to explain the “triad” concept:

St. Augustine used the “memory, understanding and will” – the “psychological triad” in which all are clearly “mind” but with 3 distinctions.

St. Augustine also used “To Be, To Know, To Will” as an image [Confessions, Bk13, chpt 11, ]

St. John Chrysostom uses “word from mind” to show the 2 distinction in 1 idea. [Exact Explanation Bk1 Chpt6]. Then in Bk1 Chpt8 he uses a “sun, ray, radiance” triad as an approximation toward the Trinity. See his “Defense of Images/Icons” for many other examples. See this article, paragraph #7:  
<https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/john-of-damascus>  
for more of his images used for the Trinity [from Defense of Images against Iconoclasm].

Lastly, the Catechism of the Catholic Church [#2205] says that marriage contains some image of the Trinity in that the love of the one for the beloved IS a third person. I think this is a wonderful image because it also shows us why matrimony is so important for Catholics. It is connected to the heart of our Faith.

4. This article quotes several Church Fathers on the Trinity. A good quote could help establish the doctrine from the earliest of days of the Church.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinitarianism\\_in\\_the\\_Church\\_Fathers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinitarianism_in_the_Church_Fathers)

5. This article explores images of the “triad” in nature. It is “heavy” on examples from science.

<http://www.trinity.la/trinityinnature.htm>

6. Normally I focus on the importance of the Trinity in fostering our Charity, highlighting relationality, and the liturgy as the Worship of God the Father in the Son by the Holy Spirit. We are at the heart of the Trinity in the worship of the Mass. I use images to demonstrate that “3 things in one what” is possible and “vestigiae Trinitatis” are all around us.

### **Coronatide themes:**

a. Maybe something involving how the Father and the Spirit were with Jesus in his Passion, so we, members of the Body of Christ are living in the grace of the Trinity. As Jesus conquered so will we. We only need to stay there in the Heart of the Trinity.

b. The relational aspect of the Trinity could be invoked to encourage the congregation to practice radical charity at this time. Make the calls to “visit” and check up on family, friends, etc., offer to help w/ buying things, mow the lawn of an elderly person, etc.

7. Lastly, if you want to consult the Catechism on the Trinity I suggest:

CCC 202, 232-260, 684 732 on the mystery of the Trinity

CCC 249, 813, 950, 1077-1109, 2945 on the Trinity and our liturgy

CCC 2655, 2664-2672 on the Trinity and Christian prayer

CCC 2205 on the family as the image of the Trinity [cited above]

**JUNE 7, 2020**

**The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity**

Lectionary: 164

**Reading 1**

**EX 34:4B-6, 8-9**

Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets. Having come down in a cloud, the LORD stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, "LORD." Thus the LORD passed before him and cried out, "The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship. Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company. This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."

**Responsorial Psalm**

**DN 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56**

R. (52b) **Glory and praise for ever!**

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our fathers, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever; And blessed is your holy and glorious name, praiseworthy and exalted above all for all ages.  
R. **Glory and praise for ever!**

Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, praiseworthy and glorious above all forever.  
R. **Glory and praise for ever!**

Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.  
R. **Glory and praise for ever!**

Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne upon the cherubim, praiseworthy and exalted above all forever.  
R. **Glory and praise for ever!**

**Reading 2**

**2 COR 13:11-13**

Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace,

**This side notes where in the readings we might find topics for preaching the homily.**

God reveals himself to Moses. He will go along with the people of Israel. In Jesus the Lord reveals the fullness of His Truth – a Trinity of Persons. He will accompany us on our journey with His own Spirit.

In the fullness of His revelation to us, that God is a Trinity of Persons in one Divine Godhead, our God is to be worshipped and praised.



and the God of love and peace will be with you.  
Greet one another with a holy kiss.  
All the holy ones greet you.  
The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of  
you.

**Alleluia**

**CF. RV 1:8**

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;  
to God who is, who was, and who is to come.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel**

**JN 3:16-18**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him might not  
perish  
but might have eternal life.  
For God did not send his Son into the world to  
condemn the world,  
but that the world might be saved through him.  
Whoever believes in him will not be condemned,  
but whoever does not believe has already been  
condemned,  
because he has not believed in the name of the  
only Son of God.

The opening greeting for Mass is a clear statement  
of the 3 Persons in One Divine Nature.

The Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit are  
worshipped as One.

Father [called God] and Son are distinguished.  
The power to change into a child of God is given in  
the Spirit. The work of our conversion is a work of  
the entire Holy Trinity.

**Dominican Homily Help: June 14, 2020, Corpus Christi**  
Fr. Charles Shonk, O.P.

First Reading: Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a

- When the people are discouraged and afraid, Moses reminds them that:
  - God is in charge: *“Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert...”*
  - God has taken care of them in the past and will do so in the future: *“Do not forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its saraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers.”*
  - God allowed them to suffer hunger in order to feed them with his own food and to teach them to rely on him: *“He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.”*

Second Reading: 1 Cor 10:16-17

- In receiving the Body and Blood of Christ at a time like this, we experience the unity of the Body of Christ in an especially powerful way, because many of us are suffering: *Because the loaf of bread is one, we, though many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.*
- We can receive the Eucharist on behalf of someone who cannot during this time of pandemic, asking the Lord to impart the grace of our Communion to that person.

Gospel: Jn 6:51-58

- After becoming man and dying on a cross for us, how could God humble himself anymore? By becoming our food...
  - "The humility of Jesus can be seen in the crib, in the exile to Egypt, in the hidden life, in the inability to make people understand Him, in the desertion of His apostles, in the hatred of His persecutors, in all the terrible suffering and death of His Passion, and now in His permanent state of humility in the tabernacle, where He has reduced Himself to such a small particle of bread that the priest can hold Him with two fingers. The more we empty ourselves, the more room we give God to fill us." —Saint Teresa of Calcutta
- He *can* do this because he is God. He *does* do it because he is Love.
- The Eucharist is the most startling and comforting way in which he fulfills his post-Resurrection promise, "I will be with you always."
- How do you get an animal to trust you? By feeding it. God, by feeding us with the Eucharist, is gradually helping us to trust him and to believe in him.

- During this time of pandemic in which death (and the fear of death) stalks through the world, we must recover the simple faith of a child and learn to believe what Jesus tells us, that he is the bread of life: *“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”*

**Dominican homily help: July 5, 2020, 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Fr. Stephen Alcott, O.P.

Readings:

Zechariah 9:9-10

Psalm 145

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11: 25-30

**An approachable king in a time of caution and distancing**

Zechariah 9:9-10

The prophet Zechariah in our first reading presents a king whose dominion stretches from sea to sea, even to the ends of the earth, and yet who is meekly riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This reading is referenced in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pgph 559:

How will Jerusalem welcome her Messiah? Although Jesus had always refused popular attempts to make him king, he chooses the time and prepares the details for his messianic entry into the city of "his father David". Acclaimed as son of David, as the one who brings salvation (*Hosanna* means "Save!" or "Give salvation!"), the "King of glory" enters his City "riding on an ass". Jesus conquers the Daughter of Zion, a figure of his Church, neither by ruse nor by violence, but by the humility that bears witness to the truth. And so the subjects of his kingdom on that day are children and God's poor, who acclaim him as had the angels when they announced him to the shepherds. Their acclamation, "Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord", is taken up by the Church in the "*Sanctus*" of the Eucharistic liturgy that introduces the memorial of the Lord's Passover.

Jesus, the fulfillment of this prophecy, became approachable. He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey's foal. The children were there to greet him along with others. This was not a triumphal entry of a king surrounded by glittering spears and high security. This was an approachable king.

A king who was approachable from the moment he was born, in a stable in Bethlehem. Such a humble place that even shepherds could approach. The magi did not find him in Herod's palace, where they would naturally expect to find the newborn king of Judea. They presented their kingly gifts to a child in a humble dwelling.

Throughout his public ministry, he was eminently approachable—not only by magi from far places, wealthy tax collectors, centurions, and members of the Sanhedrin, but by shepherds, fishermen, a Samaritan woman, the sick, lepers, those paralyzed, and by those possessed by demons.

Even in this time of the pandemic, and the consequent caution and social distancing we observe, Jesus wants us to approach him, to come close to him as he comes close to us, especially in the

Eucharist, with all of our own burdens, to bring them to his meek and humble heart. Even for those who cannot yet approach the Eucharist due to their health circumstances, Jesus invites us to bring all of our burdens to share with him—and his shoulders are more than capable of bearing them with us.

### **In a time of physical vulnerability, a promise of unconquerable bodily life**

Romans 8:9, 11-13

We are given a passage from Paul's Letter to the Romans that reminds us that the light of the Easter season and Pentecost is still bright within us. The Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in us, and through the same Spirit we not only share in the life of the Trinity on earth, we also look forward to the resurrection of the body, as we profess in the Creed, and as explained in the *Catechism*, which quotes this passage:

**989** We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**990** The term "flesh" refers to man in his state of weakness and mortality. The "resurrection of the flesh" (the literal formulation of the Apostles' Creed) means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our "mortal body" will come to life again.

This could be an opportunity for our parishioners to reflect on the Sacraments of Initiation that, while delayed, are now able to be given to those waiting for them. These sacraments powerfully connect us to the life of the Trinity, and give us hope that even amid reminders of our own mortality, and also amid the loss of friends, family members, neighbors, and parishioners, our illness-prone bodies are destined for eternal joy, free from all suffering and death when all is made new.

### **An alternative to trying to control what is beyond your control**

Matthew 11: 25-30

Jesus, the Son of God, is Lord. All things have been handed over to him by the Father. Put another way, he is in control—absolutely.

And yet, he freely and lovingly wades into the world of those who are not in control—the world of those who are heavily burdened, often by burdens they did not choose. He is meek, and humble of heart. So meek and humble, in fact, that some of his disciples are surprised (such as

when Jesus washes their feet) and occasionally scandalized (when Jesus tells them that he will be arrested, condemned, and crucified). Put another way, Jesus in many ways appears to his disciples *not* to be in control of his circumstances. They sometimes urge him to seize control, or at least let them do so: once James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven upon a town that would not let them enter. Jesus chose instead just to walk around it.

During this time of the Coronavirus pandemic, we are experiencing a virus and a rapid succession of consequences that are *novel*—new, unexpected, dangerous, and worrisome. We instinctively try to *control* the situation as much as we can. This is not a bad thing, of course, and we rightly expect those responsible for our common good to take prudent measures to protect lives and livelihoods. But there is only so much that can be controlled, especially when so much is new and unknown. Many of our parishioners are experiencing this worrisome, angering, and even frightening lack of control over this pandemic and its many effects.

One possible application of this Gospel passage is to recognize that our Lord—though all things have been handed over to him—took on our own vulnerable human nature, humbling himself so much that he seemed more a victim of his circumstances than the Lord of all. Yet he showed us that when we can't call down fire from heaven to consume all of our problems or at least control them, we can walk around them in his company, knowing that no matter what happens, those who are joined in friendship to Christ cannot be overcome by anything for long, not even death.

**Dominican Homily Help: June 28, 2020, 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Fr Bernard Mulcahy, O.P.

“You too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus” (today’s epistle).

- Christians can be spiritually alive or spiritually dead. Being spiritually alive is what we call being in the state of grace. Being spiritually dead is being in the state of sin. You can be physically alive but spiritually dead. And you can be physically dead but spiritually alive. If you are physically dead and spiritually dead, you’re in Hell, which would be the worst. Hopefully all of us here now, physically alive, are also spiritually alive—“living for God in Christ Jesus.”
- How can you tell something is alive? It moves. It acts, even if it’s asleep. If it’s awake and alive, it’s doing things. If we are awake and spiritually alive, what things are we doing? We are loving Jesus above all, following him in preference to everything (today’s Gospel). We are also, if we are spiritually alive, receiving Jesus and his Father when we receive a disciple, or give a cup of cold water to one of “these little ones” (today’s Gospel). (Nobody nearby needs cold water? Don’t be so literal. People thirst for kindness. Feed them, speak kindly to them, pray for them, do them some good.) This comes down to the great commandments: love God and neighbor.
- How can I be spiritually alive if we are still not able to go to Mass? You can still love God and neighbor. Being unable to go to church is a giant loss, but it’s not the end of the world. Suffer this a while, grow in being spiritually alive so that when you come back to church it will be even better than before.
- What if I’m spiritually dead? I mean, what if I have sinned? Go to confession. Here’s how. But as long as you honestly intend to go to confession as soon as you can, and are genuinely contrite, God does not leave you spiritually dead (even if you feel very guilty). Make your contrition perfect even before you go to confession. See link below.
- The kingdom is at hand. So if you’ve sinned, be sorry now; approach the sacrament of penance Jesus gave us as soon as you can. Meanwhile, how can you be alive? Love God, love your neighbor. Beg God to deepen your conversion and teach you to love Him and others. Remember that God’s love for you, Jesus’s desire to eat the Passover (Eucharist, Luke 22:15) with you even if you can’t actually eat that meal with him right this minute. Start NOW doing what the second reading says: you must consider yourself dead to sin and alive for God in Christ Jesus.

<https://angelusnews.com/faith/making-your-contrition-perfect-in-a-time-without-confession/>

**Dominican homily help: July 5, 2020, 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
Fr. Stephen Alcott, O.P.

Readings:

Zechariah 9:9-10

Psalm 145

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11: 25-30

**An approachable king in a time of caution and distancing**

Zechariah 9:9-10

The prophet Zechariah in our first reading presents a king whose dominion stretches from sea to sea, even to the ends of the earth, and yet who is meekly riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This reading is referenced in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pgph 559:

How will Jerusalem welcome her Messiah? Although Jesus had always refused popular attempts to make him king, he chooses the time and prepares the details for his messianic entry into the city of "his father David". Acclaimed as son of David, as the one who brings salvation (*Hosanna* means "Save!" or "Give salvation!"), the "King of glory" enters his City "riding on an ass". Jesus conquers the Daughter of Zion, a figure of his Church, neither by ruse nor by violence, but by the humility that bears witness to the truth. And so the subjects of his kingdom on that day are children and God's poor, who acclaim him as had the angels when they announced him to the shepherds. Their acclamation, "Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord", is taken up by the Church in the "*Sanctus*" of the Eucharistic liturgy that introduces the memorial of the Lord's Passover.

Jesus, the fulfillment of this prophecy, became approachable. He entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey's foal. The children were there to greet him along with others. This was not a triumphal entry of a king surrounded by glittering spears and high security. This was an approachable king.

A king who was approachable from the moment he was born, in a stable in Bethlehem. Such a humble place that even shepherds could approach. The magi did not find him in Herod's palace, where they would naturally expect to find the newborn king of Judea. They presented their kingly gifts to a child in a humble dwelling.

Throughout his public ministry, he was eminently approachable—not only by magi from far places, wealthy tax collectors, centurions, and members of the Sanhedrin, but by shepherds, fishermen, a Samaritan woman, the sick, lepers, those paralyzed, and by those possessed by demons.

Even in this time of the pandemic, and the consequent caution and social distancing we observe, Jesus wants us to approach him, to come close to him as he comes close to us, especially in the



Eucharist, with all of our own burdens, to bring them to his meek and humble heart. Even for those who cannot yet approach the Eucharist due to their health circumstances, Jesus invites us to bring all of our burdens to share with him—and his shoulders are more than capable of bearing them with us.

### **In a time of physical vulnerability, a promise of unconquerable bodily life**

Romans 8:9, 11-13

We are given a passage from Paul's Letter to the Romans that reminds us that the light of the Easter season and Pentecost is still bright within us. The Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in us, and through the same Spirit we not only share in the life of the Trinity on earth, we also look forward to the resurrection of the body, as we profess in the Creed, and as explained in the *Catechism*, which quotes this passage:

**989** We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.

**990** The term "flesh" refers to man in his state of weakness and mortality. The "resurrection of the flesh" (the literal formulation of the Apostles' Creed) means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our "mortal body" will come to life again.

This could be an opportunity for our parishioners to reflect on the Sacraments of Initiation that, while delayed, are now able to be given to those waiting for them. These sacraments powerfully connect us to the life of the Trinity, and give us hope that even amid reminders of our own mortality, and also amid the loss of friends, family members, neighbors, and parishioners, our illness-prone bodies are destined for eternal joy, free from all suffering and death when all is made new.

### **An alternative to trying to control what is beyond your control**

Matthew 11: 25-30

Jesus, the Son of God, is Lord. All things have been handed over to him by the Father. Put another way, he is in control—absolutely.

And yet, he freely and lovingly wades into the world of those who are not in control—the world of those who are heavily burdened, often by burdens they did not choose. He is meek, and humble of heart. So meek and humble, in fact, that some of his disciples are surprised (such as

when Jesus washes their feet) and occasionally scandalized (when Jesus tells them that he will be arrested, condemned, and crucified). Put another way, Jesus in many ways appears to his disciples *not* to be in control of his circumstances. They sometimes urge him to seize control, or at least let them do so: once James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven upon a town that would not let them enter. Jesus chose instead just to walk around it.

During this time of the Coronavirus pandemic, we are experiencing a virus and a rapid succession of consequences that are *novel*—new, unexpected, dangerous, and worrisome. We instinctively try to *control* the situation as much as we can. This is not a bad thing, of course, and we rightly expect those responsible for our common good to take prudent measures to protect lives and livelihoods. But there is only so much that can be controlled, especially when so much is new and unknown. Many of our parishioners are experiencing this worrisome, angering, and even frightening lack of control over this pandemic and its many effects.

One possible application of this Gospel passage is to recognize that our Lord—though all things have been handed over to him—took on our own vulnerable human nature, humbling himself so much that he seemed more a victim of his circumstances than the Lord of all. Yet he showed us that when we can't call down fire from heaven to consume all of our problems or at least control them, we can walk around them in his company, knowing that no matter what happens, those who are joined in friendship to Christ cannot be overcome by anything for long, not even death.