

Homily by Deacon George Mounce III

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam (AMDG) - "For the greater glory of God."

May 17, 2020

6th Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; 1 Pt 3:15-18; Jn 14:15-21

AMDG Holy Spirit, you write it, you deliver it, and I will give you all the credit and the glory.

Next week we celebrate the Ascension, Jesus returns to Heaven; he will not leave us orphans.

The week after we celebrate Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes to help us and encourage us.

Today Jesus, the first advocate and counselor, promises us another advocate and counselor.

What Jesus says will happen, will happen for our benefit and for our salvation.

And what Jesus promises should be a source of hope for us.

But hope is more than what we feel on the inside; what did we hear in the second reading?

"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you a reason for your hope."

What is hope, am I hopeful? Does the world see that you and I are hopeful people?

If someone asked why are we hopeful, what would we say?

Hope is the firm assurance that with the help of the Holy Spirit,

What Jesus has promised us is true: a better world to those who are His own.

Hope is not a desire or a wish, like "I hope I won't get sick from the virus."

Hopeful people are confident that death is not the end, but only a path to eternal life with God.

Hope means we see to the end of the story, even while we suffer or worry

The Bible says hope is "an anchor of the soul", what keeps a boat from drifting away,

When we are hopeful and confident people, we are secure and connected to Jesus.

Jesus prepared his disciples for what was going to happen after the Last Supper.

What he said came true; but even though they ran away, betrayed and denied him,

He sent the Spirit and they were changed; they were now witnesses to hope, no longer afraid.

Their hope showed on their faces, in their voices, and in how they treated each other:

Their reason for hope was written on their hearts and spoken on their lips.
They knew that God guided their vision toward believing in Jesus and his promise of heaven.
So what would I say if someone asked me what is the reason for my hope?
Maybe they are searching for someone to show them why hope is important.
They may not ask unless something was showing by my words and actions.
Just for me, my reason for hope is that I have been forgiven; I want to see God face to face.
And because I choose to obey him because I love him and believe in him,
I try to walk every day with the Holy Spirit who enlightens my thoughts and prayers.
It isn't easy, but I choose hope over despair and my hope brings me joy.
How would you explain your reason for your hope? Is the promise of heaven real to you?
That promise of eternal life is there for those who hope in the Lord and trust in his Word.
Jesus said he would not leave his followers orphans and he will not leave us orphans.
Even while we wait in joyful hope for his glorious coming again,
Jesus is still present in all the Sacraments, at every Baptism, Confession, Confirmation,
Every Marriage, Ordination, Anointing, here in the Eucharist in His Word and in His very self.
Let us pray that we can celebrate all these together very soon...and very safely.
A deacon friend was dying of cancer; he grew weaker very quickly from his illness.
In his room hung a blue banner with one word in white letters which he looked at every day.
The word: "hope"; when I visited him for the last time, he said that he looked at the banner daily.
He said his hope was both for a cure, but also for the strength to face death and meet God.
He was living in joyful hope, no fear; his hope is fulfilled: he is with God for eternity.
Today, let us not choose despair of life, of the virus, of tragedy, or of difficulty.
Let us be willing to tell others why we choose to live in joyful hope.