

6th SUNDAY OF EASTER (C), MAY 25, 2025.

We are saved through the ultimate prize paid in full by Jesus Christ.

First text: (Acts 15: 1-2, 22-29. New International Version)

“Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: ***“Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”*** This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, ***“The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”*** (Acts 15: 1, 5)

The Council at Jerusalem (about 50 A.D.): This is the Council or conference of the earliest Christian Apostles in Jerusalem that decreed that Gentile Christians did not have to observe the Mosaic Law of the Jews.

Jews on the Mosaic Law: The question of whether Gentile believers should obey the law of Moses to be saved was extremely critical at this point in Christianity’s history and could have potentially split the early church if not carefully handled. Suppose the Jerusalem Council had taken the wrong course of action. In that case, that is, if the Judaizers had won their argument, then circumcision, all those animal sacrifices, dietary laws, ritual washings, and sabbath restrictions would have been required as a sign of conversion. Can you imagine that! The product today would be a Jewish-centric version of Christianity. Christianity would have become another sect within Judaism instead of God’s fulfilled plan for all the people of every nation and language. The development of a distinct, universal, or Catholic church may never have occurred. Many times, one makes the mistake of upholding tradition, structure, and legal requirements as a means of obeying God. We must make sure that the gospel we preach to others brings them freedom, and life, and not rules and ceremonies.

Christ was clear on the promise of the Holy Spirit: “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16: 12-13).

FR. MARTIN EZEIHUAKU, MSP. Homily 6th Sunday of Easter May 25, 2025

God's revelation to Peter was clear: "Peter saw heaven opened and something like a wagon being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." The voice spoke to him, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." This happened three times. (Acts 10: 11-16). Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10: 34, 35).

About discrimination or favoritism, **The Holy Spirit was also very clear:** "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. ***They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.***" So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (Acts 10: 44-48)

God accepts everyone – male or female, young or old, who fears Him and does what is right. Peter's debate and pronouncement: Everyone is saved, not by the Mosaic law, but by faith in Christ alone. Peter remembers his personal encounter in the house of Cornelius in Caesarea (Acts 10) where the Holy Spirit first came upon the Gentiles as a sign that God accepts them into the church just as they are (Acts 10: 44-48). ***"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.*** Here at St. Pius X Church, we say, "You belong here." We recognize the fact that we are all children of God. Everyone is welcome to worship together, learn together, and grow and transform into better disciples of Christ. **We are saved through the sacrifice, the ultimate prize, paid in full by Jesus Christ. We can approach God the Father in the Holy Spirit.**

Conflict resolution strategy in the church: Issues must be confronted, and all sides of the arguments must be given a fair hearing. The discussion should be held in the presence of leaders who are spiritually mature and can be trusted to make wise decisions. Then everyone should abide by the decision.

Second text: (Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23). The new and heavenly city described in the Book of Revelation was magnificent, and yet the only light in the city is Jesus Christ. "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp." This New Jerusalem is a city united in love, with the victorious Jesus residing in it and each of its members.

Gospel of John 14:23-29: The Gospel passage reminds us that the Holy Spirit, abiding within us, is our Teacher, our Advocate, and the Source of our peace and joy. The passage also offers a vision of hope. Jesus affirms that even though He will no longer be visibly present among them, He will continue to be present through the Holy Spirit. But the Advocate will deepen their understanding of the revelation given by Jesus. The role of the Holy Spirit is to ***teach and to remind the apostles of what Jesus has already taught them***. “At work since creation, having previously ‘spoken through the prophets,’ the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them ‘into all the truth’” (CCC #243).

Kizza’s indwelling God: A lady called Kizza, who was blind and deaf from birth. A story is told that Kizza’s teacher, Annie Sullivan, had given her the names of physical objects in American Sign Language. Miss Sullivan attempted to explain God and tapped out the symbols for the name “God.” Much to the teacher’s surprise, Kizza spelled back, “Thank you for telling me God’s Name, Teacher, for He has touched me many times before.” “How could Kizza have known about God? Although she was blind and deaf, she knew God, for God had shown Himself to her. That is the “revelation” of an indwelling God about whom today’s readings speak.

The active presence of the Holy Spirit among us: We are not alone. One of the significant social and ethical problems of our time is isolation. Today, approximately 25% of all adults live alone. Spouses, parents, and children often live as virtual strangers to one another. This is unfortunate because we never need to be alone. Jesus shares his joy with us and replaces the burden of our guilt with the freedom of forgiveness. He takes our grief and turns it into joy. So, we need only allow Jesus into our lives to be rid of this loneliness and pain. Oneness with Jesus is the greatest gift we can give our children, our friends, or those who see no purpose in life. We can help to bring people into unity with Jesus, a unity that will change their lives.

This Memorial Day weekend, we remember and pray for all the men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice for the peace and freedom we enjoy today in our country. May God continue to shine on them His unending light and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we celebrate this Eucharistic meal, this Holy Mass, let us celebrate the ultimate price Jesus paid in love for our redemption. May this Eucharistic celebration empower us to recognize that ALL ARE SAVED IN CHRIST. May the Holy Spirit, actively dwelling within us, continue to lead and guide us to these realities. AMEN.

GOD BLESS YOU.

FR. MARTIN EZEIHUAKU, MSP.

FR. MARTIN EZEIHUAKU, MSP. Homily 6th Sunday of Easter May 25, 2025

