

6th Sunday of Easter

The number of children worldwide who have lost parents is estimated at 133 million. Every day 5,760 children are orphaned. In sub-Saharan Africa some 15 million children have lost their parents to AIDS. Millions become orphans because of national and international conflicts and natural disasters. To meet the needs of these children a home, education, health care and love is a daunting task. The Old Testament scriptures remind us frequently to take care of widows, children and foreigners, who are the most vulnerable in society.

Tom Bodett, the spokesperson for Motel 6, who ends every ad with the promise, “We’ll leave the light on for you,” also said, “A person needs just three things to be happy in this world – someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.” The gospel today is part of Jesus’ farewell discourse at the Last Supper. Even though he is leaving them – he will be crucified the next day – he will not leave them orphaned. He assures them that they won’t become orphaned, without anyone to care for them. He will be gone but he will send the Spirit as their advocate and guide. The Spirit will be like the light Motel 6 leaves on for you.

The Spirit that Jesus gave to the church on Pentecost is our reason to hope in what can often seem like a hopeless world. T.S.Eliot wrote in his “Four Quartets,” “We must be still and still moving, Into another intensity, For a further union, A deeper communion.” The Spirit, the Advocate will do for the church what Jesus did, but in another way, through the Spirit of Jesus abiding in his disciples. The Spirit will keep us still, in the words of Eliot, and yet still moving, still growing in God’s love, still moving ever closer to God the Father. Each time we live out our faith we move into what Eliot calls “another intensity,” a deeper union with Christ.

Jesus says in the gospel today, “Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father and I will love him and reveal myself to him

(or her)” And that’s the great reason for our hope, no matter what we face, natural disasters, human conflicts of one kind or another, forming a new parish, or whatever. We have not been left orphaned. We have the Spirit. We are never alone.