

## READINGS, REFLECTION AND PRAYERS FOR 6th SUNDAY OF EASTER

(from the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference Mass Readings  
<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/>)

### A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 8:5-8. 14-17

*They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result, there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.



The Word of the Lord.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*Ps 65*

**Response**

*Cry out with joy to God all the earth.*

1. Cry out with joy to God all the earth,  
O sing to the glory of his name.  
O render him glorious praise.

Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds'

*Response*

2. Before you all the earth shall bow;  
shall sing to you, sing to your name!  
Come and see the works of God,  
tremendous his deeds among men.

*Response*

3. He turned the sea into dry land,  
they passed through the river dry-shod.  
Let our joy then be in him;  
he rules for ever by his might.

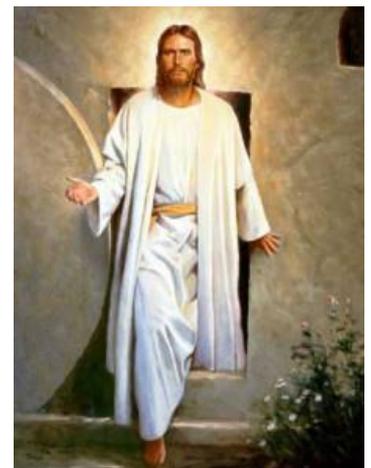
*Response*

4. Come and hear, all who fear God.  
I will tell what he did for my soul:  
Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer  
nor withhold his love from me.

*Response*

### **A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PETER 3:15-18**

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. Give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. If it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong. Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.



The Word of the Lord.

Jesus said: 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word.  
My Father will love him, and we shall come to him.' *Jn 14: 23*

***A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN 14:15-21***

*The Promise of the Holy Spirit*

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments and I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

"I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me; and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

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**REFLECTION**

Cultivating senior students as leaders in Mt Carmel School, a teacher asked them to consider "How am I leading myself?" During the current lockdown's deprivations, each of us could track how we have led ourselves in our circumstances. When our parish's services resume fully, again we could ask, "How will I lead myself - my mission, my participation and my contribution both within and beyond Regina Caeli?"

How has the lockdown changed life for you? There have been some serious negatives. Hopefully, there have been some positives. When Regina Caeli's doors open for us, the

furnishings will be the same but what might be new in us from what we learnt during the lockdown. We may discern new ways in which we could live the mission of Jesus.

Today's Gospel presents Jesus handing on his mission to his disciples. His mission was to draw disciples life-long into his intimate communion with the Father. God's love for us has always been unconditional; our response has always been invited and free but essential. Since the first Pentecost, the Spirit of Jesus has always been with us leading us to prayer, to our identity in Christ, to learning, to connection with others, to service and above all, to self-giving. The Spirit has been with us during the lockdown and will be with us when our parish life resumes.

The nub of Jesus' mission for us is our commitment to the Great Commandment and to the Great Commission. Many of us need to grow in how we understand, speak about and listen to God. It can change how we perceive our neighbours and our response to them. There have been rich stories of practical help given to people in need. As well, Jesus' Great Commission applies to all of us in our humble circumstances. How do you feed your learning in your faith that you hand on— reading the Scriptures, listening to homilies, information programs on television, radio or internet, reading from books or magazines, prayer, dialoguing with others?

In the Acts of the Apostles, through the Spirit leading Philip in his preaching and teaching, tragic enemies – Jews and Samaritans – were reconciled and rejoiced together in their celebrations of their Baptisms in Christ. Philip was not a magician for whom Baptism was just an external act to take place. Our Baptism can shape our life-long journey profoundly. Benefits abound when we share faith and life in practical ways with people in our own Regina Caeli community. As well, we are increasingly aware of our need to respect, relate to and learn from people in other Christian and from multi-faith communities, locally and further afield.

Peter, in his First Letter, declares for us the significance of the love of Christ Risen in whom we are baptized – in whom we belong, believe and make our choices. It is a powerful truth that in Christ, we are no longer prisoners in the grip of sin and death. Brokenness prevails in our own lives and in the lives of others. Our compassion, practical support and seeking of wisdom can enhance our dispositions when professional support is needed.

How can we lead ourselves? Our response as participants in the mission of Jesus will be unique and of crucial importance. Let's have confidence seeking the life-giving Spirit of Truth. It will be normal for us to have to ask for guidance from God's Spirit often!

How fortunate we are to have a strong tradition of honouring Mary who lived a Spirit-filled life of faith, hope and love throughout her life; she had "to lead herself" often. Her kinswoman Elizabeth acclaimed her lovingly, "Blessed are you who believed that the promises God made to you will be fulfilled!" Mary is praying for us. Let's go on, *leading as we can*.