

Deuteronomy 4: 39,40 ***“Know that the Lord is God...that you may have long life on the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you forever.”***

Romans 8: 14,16 ***“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are [children] of God.”***

Matthew 28: 16,20 ***“The eleven disciples...worshiped, but they doubted... [Jesus said to them] ...behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”***

Reflection:

These are trying times. We are all affected by the violence which pervades our culture. The economic crisis, the greed, the lack of respect for others and the lack of respect for life itself affects us all. Yet, we are truly blessed, for we are the children of God. We are the descendants of those to whom God has revealed himself (descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). It is we who are led by the Spirit of God, if only we allow it.

Jesus has promised us that He is with us always. We have reason to rejoice! We have what the world needs – not riches, nor power, nor fame – we have the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who lives and dwells among us!! This is the reason we can have peace in a world of unrest and suffering.

Aware of God with us, “Emmanuel,” we can be grateful for all of life’s gifts, from the simplest, like a warm, sunny morning, to the most complicated, like seeing God’s hand in a painful experience we have had to endure. Through experience we come to know that God can bring good out of any situation.

How do we follow the Lord in these perplexing times? We come to know Him by spending time with Him at Mass, in the Scriptures, in prayer, and in the silence of our hearts. We share the gifts He has given us, even if we have very little. (Remember the widow’s mite?) We honor and respect others, no matter their appearance, their color or background. We are to bring Christ’s love and presence to them regardless of how they are dressed, their cleanliness, the number of tattoos or piercings they might have, whether they are gang members, drug abusers or alcoholics (or whatever else we might look at to make judgments about them).

We, too, have our downfalls and weaknesses, and we are all equal in God’s sight. We are no better than anyone else. We all need God’s healing, and we all need to grow in His ways while continuing our earthly journey. As we grow in our relationship with God, we are called to bring Him to those who cross our path, those whom God has put in our way. God calls us to reach out so that others can experience His love, His peace, His healing, and His guidance.

Just as in the time after the first Pentecost, Jesus wants us, His (current) disciples, to spread His love and teaching to the world, which gravely needs His presence. We are in dire need of God, whom we are driving from our schools, our laws, our speech, our country.

Action:

- **Improve your prayer life, so that, by being closer to the Lord, you can more easily bring His presence to others.**
- **Share your time, talent, energy ... with others, remembering that there are many who have less than you. If you have been laid off, this would be a good time to volunteer. There are abundant opportunities to help others in need.**
- **Donate used clothing in the boxes in the back of the churches. Most of us have much more than we really need. Others do not have enough.**
- **Speak about the Lord often; tell others about how God has blessed you.**

Let us go out and proclaim the Good News!

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