

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**May 22, 2022**

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**Lifelong Learning**

Graduates walk across the stage in cap and gown, receiving diplomas or degrees and pausing for pictures. The celebration marks the end of a time of learning and a transition to a time of doing. New jobs require orientation and more practical learning, but soon the employees are proficient at their work. The sheet metal apprentice becomes the expert journeyman. The accountant sees no more surprises in tax preparation. The retail worker masters the merchandise, the computer system, and dealing with difficult customers.

This movement from learning to knowing is not limited to work. We learn about civic issues and come to know where we stand. We learn about our faith and come to solid beliefs about our values. We learn about ourselves and who we are as people and settle into a sense of our own identity. One could call this process of learning and knowing through experience “lifelong learning.”

Jesus gives us an image of the Holy Spirit as teacher. But the Holy Spirit is not just any teacher; the Holy Spirit can teach us everything! The implication is that lifelong learning is less about information and more about what it means to be human, less about training and more about our relationship with God.

How do we experience the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Perhaps it is in the surprises of grace where someone’s generosity overwhelms us. Maybe it is in the nudges of knowing when an uncomfortable question opens up a place for us to reflect on our prejudices. Sometimes the font or table softens our heart in just the right moment to find a path for forgiveness.

With this promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus also leaves the gift of his peace, that in our learning and growing we may also know the peace that “surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7).

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