

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Take all of the ingredients and mix them together. That's one way to understand the Gospel reading for this week. We are all mixed together with God. Jesus said that we are not alone, even during those times when we feel alone. God is in us and we are in God. A great mixture!

To be aware and conscious of others is a very important part of being human and being Christian. To be *only* concerned about oneself, narrows one's sense of the great mystery of life that surrounds us. It makes us small and self-centered. It violates a primary reason God created us, to enjoy life with God and with all of God's creation.

Those who feel most alive are people who are connected to all of creation. Their senses are stimulated by the sights and sounds around them. They connect with mind and heart to the abundance that God has created for this life and beyond. Jesus wanted us to know that from God's standpoint we are already deeply connected. But we have to open ourselves to this magnificent truth.

A Gospel Word for the Home

John 14:15-21

We remain observers "at the table" with Jesus, as he continues his final address. He will soon leave to head for his death on the cross. But there's more to the story: he will come back as their Risen Savior. He will abide in them, especially through the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. His primary intent is to assure them that they will never be abandoned. God has permanently connected with them, and with all of humankind. Their role is to inform people of this wondrous truth.

Awareness of the presence of others does not happen automatically. We must open ourselves to affirming the presence of others. We must be receptive. In communication, it's called active listening. It is a learned skill to be truly aware of others. And it's one of the most important skills to develop if one hopes for a good marriage and pleasant family life. It's an important skill for friendship too.

Jesus wants us to deeply understand in our hearts that we are never alone. We are connected to God more than we are connected to ourselves. This truth of our Christian faith is central to our lives. We can turn to God, address God in prayers, or just sit peacefully in God's presence at any time. We don't have far to go, because God is right here, right now, always waiting.

Parent Survival

Feeling alone in our “troubles” is painful beyond measure. In that state we easily slip into self-pity, discouragement, and even depression. That’s why it’s important to stay connected with others, and that includes staying connected with God. Such awareness of others does not ensure that we will not have bad days. But it will make it easier to survive hard times.

So when life gets difficult, connect! Talk with family members, with friends, and with God. Know that when we feel alone, we can climb out of the pit of loneliness if we connect. We can take comfort that others are not only around, but they also care about us. Be open to receive help. We all inevitably need it from time to time.

Car or Meal Talk

Children worry that their parents won’t always be available. They hear about abandonment from children’s stories and in world news. So it’s never wasted when parents assure their children of their unconditional love. Children love to hear that they will *always* be loved. Reassure them that you always *want* to be near them.

One-Line Prayer

God of Trinity and Unity: Guide us in recognizing the good things about ourselves and help us see you in the love we have for each other. Amen.