Seventh Sunday C Easter **ONE IN THE SPIRIT** Allan Moss OMI

www.sjti.ac.za/resources_homily.htm

First Reading: Acts 7:55-60
Response: "***The Lord is king, most high above all the earth***" *(Ps.96:1,9)*
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 96:1,2,6,7,9
Second Reading: Apocalypse 22:12-14,16-17,20
Gospel: John 17:20-26

Celebrating the Feast of Ascension, shows the Risen Lord ascended into heaven. We look forward to his promise of Pentecost, where in the Spirit, we shall share his life with him more intimately, like a marriage. He says "What is mine is yours. All that the Father has given me I give to you. We have a life together, now and forever.

We see the first Christian witness (martyr), Stephen, dying for Christ, like Christ died for him, outside the city walls and he calls out for his executioners to be forgiven. "***Lord, do not hold this sin against them***" *(Acts 7:60)*.

"***Stephen filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God***" (Acts 7:55). He saw the destiny of the Lord and his own destiny, "***Jesus standing at God's right hand***" *(Acts 7:55).*

In his dying, St. Stephen saw the Risen Lord. Long before, the ancient psalmist looked above and beholding the heavens, believed in the greatest power. "***The Lord is king, most high above all the earth***" *(Ps.96:1,9)*

The glory of God is not only to be seen by angels and "***all spirits*** (gods) ***who worship him***" *(Ps.96:7)* but to be proclaimed by "***All peoples*** that ***see his glory***" *(Ps.96:6)*

"***Those who will have washed their robes clean***" *(Apoc.22:14)*, have their sins forgiven and "***have the right to feed on the tree of life and can come through the gates***" *(Apoc. 22:)*. The Apocalypse harkens back to Genesis when Adam and Eve lost it all through sin.

The Holy Spirit and Christ, through his bride, the Church, issue an invitation: "***Come. Let all who are thirsty come, have the water of life***" *(Apoc.22: 17).* The Christian response is *"**Come, Lord Jesus**" (Apoc.22:20).* And we shall enjoy the fruit of your redemption.

The fullness of redemption is union with God like the bride with Christ. "***I have given them the glory you gave to me***" *(Jn.17:22).* The Gospel today is Jesus high-priestly prayer at the Last Supper, where he is speaking to his disciples and he speaks to God.

He consecrates himself for the unity of God and His people, that "***they may be completely one***" *(Jn.17:23),* in a deep mystical way, "***so that the love with which you loved me may be in them***" *(Jn.17:26).* This is the work of the Spirit binding us together, making us one.

Read and reflect on the words of Jesus' discourse at Last Supper. ***Gospel*** (Jn. 17:20-26).

In the ***Eucharist*** Christ joins us to himself and to one another. He also binds us in the Spirit.

Reflect on Church ***Teachings*** of how we are one body of Christ and one in the Spirit.

We need to ***Witness*** that we are one body, one in the Spirit. ***How? What shall we do?***

FOR THE CHILDREN

Explain to the children what Jesus is saying today. ***What does Jesus want?*** *(Gospel)*

Explain how in the *Eucharist* Christians are united with Christ and with one another.

Give the children a *Teaching* of the Church on what is unity in the true sense of the word.

Encourage the children to *Witness* to ways of showing unity with Christ and with each other.

FOR TEENAGERS *(Shared Christian Praxis)*

Name the Present Action: ***What is your sense of unity, in Christ and in the Church?***

Your Story and Vision: ***What are your experiences of being one in the Spirit and with others?***

Church's Story and Vision: *Give teaching and understanding of what is unity of Christians*.

Yours and Church's Vision: Share a vision of the Kingdom of God and unity.

RCIA

Being full members in the body of Christ, we are expected to give witness to our faith. Stephen is considered the first witness, martyr, having died for the faith. His witness had a lasting effect on a young man named Saul, who would later strive to follow his example.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

I was listening to the experience of Masab Hassan Yousef, now known as Joseph in America. He is the son of Sheikh Hassan Yousef, a founder of Hamas, a political movement in Palestine. He has abandoned his family, country and religion (Islam) and became a Christian. He said he discovered that the God of the Bible was different from the God of the Koran. He said he was seeking unity, love and peace. He felt that what Jesus taught and said was the closest to the truth.
Will he find what Jesus taught in Christians? Mahatma Gandhi said he didn't. Perhaps we can prove him wrong.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Little Angelina wanted to know my latest joke. I told her about the little girl who insisted that Jonah had been swallowed by a whale. Her teacher said it impossible because the whale's throat was too small. The little girl said she will check it out when she sees Jonah in heaven. The teacher said "And what if Jonah is in hell?"
The little girl replied: "Then you will have to ask him."
'Captor ipse captus est,' I thought; and little Angelina who was also thinking, said: "Limbo!".
"What about limbo?" I asked.
"Jonah could have gone there," she said.
"I don't believe in it," I said.
"And what if we saw Jonah there?" she asked.
Was Angelina bringing the joke on me? Can the old man "see the infant pass"?*(i)*

(i) See **HOMER's**. *"**Hymn to Mercury**."* XV: with regards to how Hermes, as an infant, outwitted the great Apollo.

IMPORTANT WORD: ***Saul***, *Sha'ul (ש א ו ל)* / ***Paul***, *Paulos (Παυλος)*

The name Saul occurs in Acts over twenty times. In Hebrew, ש א ו ל *(Sha'ul)*, means 'Asked of God.' Being of the tribe of Benjamin he is probably named after the first king of Israel who was a Benjaminite. Saul was a Roman citizen by birth and his Roman name Paul seems a contraction of the Latin *'**pa**rv**ul**us',* meaning 'little,' or 'Shorty.' Paul might have been small but he was a man with a big heart and became a great apostle.
St. Augustine says that the Church owes Paul to the prayer of St. Stephen, first martyr of the Church. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."*(i)*

(i) "Semen est sanguis Christianorum."
TERTULLIANUS Septimus Florens*: '**Liber Apologeticus**. Ch.50:12.* 197. A.D.

Watchword: "***May they be one as we are one***" *(Jn.17:22)*

Hebrew:	יהיו אחד כאשר אנחנו אחד נחנו
	Yihyu 'ehad ke'asher 'anahnu 'ehad nahnu.
Greek:	**Ινα ωσιν εν καθως ημεις εν.**
	Hina osin hen kathos hemeis hen.
Latin:	**Ut sint unum, sicut et nos unum sumus.**
Portuguese:	**Para que sejam um, como nos somos um.**
Spanish:	**Para que sean uno, asi como nosotros somos uno.**
French:	**Pour qu'ils soient un comme toi et moi nous sommes un.**
German:	**Damit sie eins seien, wie wir eins sind.**
Afrikaans:	**Sodat hulle een kan wees net soos Ons een is.**
Zulu:	**Babemunye njengoba nathi sibunye.**
Xhosa:	**Babe nto-nye, njengokuba nathi sinto-nye.**
Sotho:	**Ba halaletse nneteng; lentswe la hao ke nnete.**
Irish:	**Ionas go mba aon iad go leir, faoi mar ata tusa, a Athair, ionamsa agus mise ionatsa.** *(A bit long but Irish from a true Irishman)*