

Homily 7th Sunday of Easter 29th May 2022

Theme: 'Plea From Jesus For Unity'

Yesterday in St John Cantius & St Nicholas parish we celebrated First Holy Communion. The children of God coming together to receive Jesus (Body and Blood) in the sacred host. This is a shared sacramental meal that was started by Jesus to keep his apostles together in faith. That we stand together as the People of God throughout all of our lives.

It is very easy as you know for the Church to split up. Judas Iscariot was the first to break away. Please God, we're not in the same league as Judas, but we can find all sorts of excuses to fall away from the being together at Mass; just remember that Jesus wants us to be together, to help each other through life. One of the strengths of a caring and faithful parish community; is giving the children of God a sense of belonging. As I've said before, this beautiful church is your spiritual home as it is has been for generations before you.

We have plenty of scope for young Catholic people to belong and participate in the parish:

- (i) We have becoming an altar server at Mass or singing in the Choir.
- (ii) We have the children's liturgy to help their faith development
- (iii) There are the scouts, cubs and beavers that meet throughout the year.
- (iv) We hope to start up the youth club after the summer again
- (v) In times to come they can help with the Youth for Lourdes and take part in the Pope Francis Caritas Awards and help the poor and needy in the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The parish is above all your spiritual community that will carry through all of your life. Please God, its always here to help you, heal you and nourish you in the storms of life.

Its at Mass that we mark the changing seasons of the Church's year, celebrating the sacraments and the great saints that inspire us in faith.

The parish should always be a welcoming place for visitors and new families that move into the community, working hand in hand with the schools and the care homes. That through the whole spectrum of life, the parish has something to offer – including a listening ear and a bag of groceries for the hungry.

So, I plead with you as your parish priest today. For the sake of these little children who have received Holy Communion from God; to keep them in the spiritual family of the Church. So not allow them to be lost. Three times in the Gospel today Jesus pleads with his apostles to stay united in the faith. It is the ungodly who seek to separate, divide that spiritual unity. The Church has now existed for over 2,000 years, a testimony in itself that it is God given and not man made; we may come and go; but the church will go on till the end of time; and the message of Jesus is do not lose your faith it is your faith that will carry you through all of life.

Finally, I implore you, dedicated parents to keep to the promises, the sacred promise you made at your child's Baptism to form them in the ways of faith. Don't sit back now and think your work is done! First Communion is an important stage but we must help them now to focus on their Confirmation in Primary 7 and nurture their faith in the challenging years of adolescence and High School.

Your child expects a loving good example from their parents – please God you will deliver that faithful parenthood, you will not let them down.

God Bless you all, Amen