

SERMON FOR MAY 17, 2020

TEXT:JOHN 14: 15-21

THEME: YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**18** “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **19** Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **20** In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **21** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

In the name of Jesus:

The comedian Jerry Lewis always sang a song at the end of his Labor Day Telethon. You Will Never Walk Alone was a song sung by Lewis to give hope to those who were affected by Muscular Dystrophy. Americans gathered around their television sets on Labor Day at the conclusion of the telethon to hear Lewis sing this song of hope for many afflicted with the disease. The popularity of this song has been revived during this pandemic.

Harrison Sheckler is a graduate student at Brooklyn College in New York. He is a music major and wanted to do something to unite people during this pandemic. Using the popular song, "You Will Never Walk Alone", Sheckler contacted choir directors and people he knew to create a video montage of people singing this song. Three hundred people participated, vocalists as well as instrumentalists, sending in video to Sheckler, who then edited the videos and created a stunning, inspiring video that has now been viewed by almost a quarter of a million people around the world. Why did Sheckler do this? He did this to offer hope to those who are on the front lines of this pandemic, our health care workers, doctors, and nurses. He did it for those who suffer from this pandemic, those who have been sick, and those who have been in quarantine. He wanted to give people comfort and a little peace during this time of uncertainty.

The past couple of weeks the U S Navy Blue Angels and U S Air Force Thunderbirds have been performing flyovers of cities, including Columbus and Central Ohio, in an effort to show solidarity and appreciation to those who affected by the virus, it was a way of saying that You Will Never Walk Alone.

In our Gospel lesson for today Jesus speaks to His disciples, and to you and me, telling us that we will never walk alone. When Jesus spoke these words to His disciples, their hearts were heavy. They had heard Jesus speak of His departure, of how it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem, be handed over to the Sanhedrin, to be mocked, crucified, and put to death on the cross. Jesus never shied from His mission, but as that time grew closer, the disciples were afraid. Their minds were whirling with questions, what will not only happen to Jesus, but what would happen to them? What would be their future, what would they do when Jesus was gone, what awaited them, what trials and tribulations would they meet after Jesus' death?

Jesus addresses these concerns in what He says to them in our Gospel lesson for today. **“18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19** Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live”. In a little while, Jesus would be crucified, and the world would not be able to see Him. But Jesus' disciples would be able to see Him after His death, because Jesus would show Himself after He rose from the dead. And this is exactly what happened. First, the disciples saw the empty tomb, wondering what this was all about. Then Jesus appeared to

His disciples, in the Upper Room, on the Road to Emmaus, and on the beach having breakfast. When they saw Jesus risen from the grave, their hearts were overjoyed! But even in this, Jesus promised His disciples that He would not leave them as orphans, He would not leave them all alone, but He would come to them.

How? Jesus promised to them that they would receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, ““If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” Jesus would send another Helper, One that would be with Jesus’ disciples forever. He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. The world can not receive Him, because the world’s hearts are firmly set apart from God and at odds with God because the world doesn’t know God.

But Jesus will give His disciples the Holy Spirit to dwell with them and live with them. The Holy Spirit would bring to remembrance all that Jesus taught His disciples, and the Holy Spirit would then move these men to record Jesus’ life, His ministry, and words in what is now known as the New

Testament. These eye witnesses to Jesus' life and ministry were given the words to write as the Spirit inspired the Apostles to write God's Word for us.

This Word not only comforted and strengthened the disciples, it gives strength and hope to you and me today. Jesus' words to you, given through the Gospel writer John inspired by the Holy Spirit is that You Will Never Walk Alone. Jesus has given to you the Holy Spirit in the waters of your Baptism. In Baptism your sins have been washed away and you have become a new creation by the power of God the Holy Spirit. Because of Baptism you belong to God, for if anyone is in Christ that person is a new creation. You are a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Christ lives in and through you.

The Spirit speaks to you today. Christ speaks in His Word. Jesus says that the blessed is the one who hears the Word of God and keeps it. If you love Jesus, you will keep His commandments by loving Him as He speaks to you in the Word. Blessed is the one who delights in the law of the Lord, and on His Law he meditates day and night. That one is like a tree planted by streams of living water, he is like a tree that continually bears fruits and whose leaves never die. God blesses that person in and through His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's blessing is yours today. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, speaks to you in the Holy Scriptures. He comforts you by reminding you that you belong to God the Father in Baptism, and that Baptism now saves you not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience before God. He is at work in the Lord's Supper to bring you Jesus' forgiveness, life, help, and salvation.

None of us could have anticipated what we have faced or will face in the future because of this pandemic. Our lives have been changed and our lives will be changed now and for the future. But in all of this, you don't have to be afraid. Why? You are not alone! The Lord's forgiveness is yours! His mercy flows like a living spring into your life everyday by the power of His Word. No matter what you will face today and in the future, you have God's assurance that you are loved. He is at work to do His will in and through you. And in your life, Jesus reminds you that YOU ARE NEVER ALONE AND that He will work all things out to your good and His glory, goodness and mercy will follow you all throughout your life, for you belong to Him, now and forever.

Amen