

# Homily for the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

May 23-24, 2020

Readings: Acts 1: 12-14; 1 Peter 4: 13-16; John 17: 1-11A

Preacher: Susan Howard

At the heart of today's readings is the Glory of God and how God wants us to be in communion with that Glory.

God's glory is evident from the beginning, when out of chaos God crafted the earth, air, water and all living things and declared it good. He created humans to share in that goodness and reflect the heavenly divine glory to the world in every generation.

From the time that God visited Adam and Eve in the Garden, Glory has been visited upon us. In the early days of our journey through the flood and the desert wilderness God's glory has traveled with us, visible in the fire and the cloud of the tabernacle. That radiant presence continues to glow in the golden doors of our tabernacles today. And is evident in the beautiful temples and Churches we build to house those tabernacles. These attempts to reflect God's Glory in art and architecture are a testament to our gratitude and devotion but they pale in comparison to the magnitude of God's Glory!

These visible manifestations of God touching the human race happen again and again—as when the Israelites experienced Moses come out of the cloud to present the 10 Commandments, and when the Apostles witnessed the glory of the Lord during his Transfiguration.

This week we celebrated the Ascension of the Lord, when the disciples saw the Glory of God come down and heard the promise that the power of the Holy Spirit will come to fill them up, to guide them along the way as the Glory filled the tabernacle of those on the journey before them. The Glory of God is meant to be experienced, so that we can know we are intimately connected to the very life and heart of God.

This life we share with God impels us to respond. One response to the wonderful gift of God's glory is to gather together in prayer, as we hear in the reading from Acts today. In one accord, all of the believers—the Apostles and the women

praying together—waited in the upper room for the Holy Spirit to commune with them. To bring them into a new communion with the Glory of God.

We sing of that Glory in our hymns. A great example is in today's Psalm 27 where the Psalmist sang:

*"This I seek,  
To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,  
That I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord and contemplate his temple."*

The psalmist voices for all of us our desire to be in God's glorious presence as we are when we are in the Church, in front of the tabernacle or in adoration before the monstrance or before one of nature's wonders.

Today we also hear that beautiful and intimate conversation that Jesus has with God in the Gospel of John. Jesus implores God to continue to let humans be part of the heavenly Glory. We have been made worthy of this because we believe, because we have listened, and because Jesus has made us part of the relationship between himself and God. Our communion with God and Jesus will be complete as Jesus Ascends to heaven and God confirms our relationship with the descent of the Holy Spirit.

So our faith is confirmed and solidified by the Glory of God. How do we reflect the Glory God has bestowed on us? I propose we do this when we sing our hymns and spiritual songs of praise, when we stay connected with the mysterious and mystical body of Christ in prayer and Holy Communion, and when we serve others by following the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We have seen God's Glory poured out through human hands as the love and care that people are showing for their neighbors, health care workers and essential personnel. We see it in the outpouring of food donations, meals and deliveries made to people in our own Church neighborhood of the South Wedge and Monroe Avenue as well as throughout the city, suburbs and rural areas wherever hunger lurks. We see it played out by the millions of people making masks for others and all those who are willing to wear a mask for the sake of everyone's health. These signs reflect our belief that each person is a tabernacle of God's glory to be cherished and preserved. Yes the Glory of God is being lived out every

day, all over the world, and for this we can still shout out our joyful Easter Alleluias!