

6th Sunday of Easter A May 29, 2011 – Fr. Gerald Haemmerle

It is an exciting time of year as we draw close to the end of the school year. We have recently celebrated First Communions and Confirmation and wedding anniversaries. Now we are into the graduation season. This past Friday evening we had the Alter Baccalaureate Mass, and this afternoon Fairmont High School holds there Baccalaureate Service here at St. Charles. Centerville and Bellbrook and Oakwood will also be holding there services. St. Charles grade school graduation is Monday a week. Most colleges have held their graduations.

Graduation ceremonies are surely joyful occasions. They mark the end of eight years or four years of hard work, of growth and accomplishments. It is appropriate that we congratulate all these students. But there is a bit of sadness on these occasions. Students will be moving on, to a different high school or college, or to the work force or armed services. Friends who have been close for many years will go in different directions. It is exciting to meet new friends, but there is sadness in losing touch with old ones. Each move forward marks the end of a certain freedom, a time of playfulness that we will never have again until we retire and become senior citizens. But moving on is not an option, life demands it.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day, the first of the summer holidays. It unofficially marks the beginning of the summer, the opening of swimming pools, the time for picnics and cookouts. There is something solemn about this holiday. On this day we remember those who have died. This holiday was first established to honor those who died fighting in the Civil War. Then it included all who have died for our country. And now we really remember all who have died. This is the one day that many people go to the cemetery to place flowers on the tombs of loved ones. We remember our loved ones and pray for them.

Our gospel today is taken from the farewell talk our lord gave to the apostles in the upper room at the last supper. It is from John's gospel, and it covers four chapters, almost one-fifth of that gospel. Jesus was trying to prepare his disciples for his departure, his passion, death, and resurrection. He knows that they would feel like orphans when he left them, they would feel all alone. Jesus told them that they would not be orphans, that he would always be with them, for he would give them his spirit, the Holy Spirit, to be their advocate and guide. The spirit would be with them always.

If we fast forward, we see this happening in the Acts of the Apostles that our first reading was taken from. Philip went to Samaria and preached and the people were converted to the faith. Then Peter and John went there and prayed over the people and laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

We continue to celebrate the Easter season, next Sunday we celebrate the feast of Ascension, and the following Sunday we celebrate Pentecost Sunday, the feast that commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit. Let us join the church in prayer that we might recognize the Spirit's presence in our lives, through graduations, through all of life's events, and especially when we die and move on to eternal life.