

May 10, 2026—Sixth Sunday of Easter—Mother’s Day

At the first Apparition of the risen Jesus to the apostles on Easter Sunday evening, Jesus breathed on them and said: **“Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you forgive are forgiven them.”** This was the first installment of the Holy Spirit, giving them the power to forgive sins in His Name, while the full gift of the Holy Spirit came 50 days later, on Pentecost Sunday. In the First Reading, we heard that the apostles gave the gift of the Holy Spirit that they received to the converts in Samaria.

The deacon Philip had proclaimed the Gospel to the Samaritans and healed the sick and cast out demons there. The Samaritans were enemies of the Jews; but before the Babylonian exile that territory was part of the 12 tribes of Israel. After the deportations, the remaining Jews mingled with pagan peoples and rejected worship in the Temple of Jerusalem when it was restored; they set up their own temple. At His Ascension, Jesus mentioned the Samaritans; He gave the apostles the big picture of their mission, saying, they **“will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”** The ten lost tribes, represented by Samaria, would have a privileged place in the preaching of the Gospel. God does not forget His people, even when we forget Him.

In this passage from Acts, we see the distinction between the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Confirmation. As a deacon, Philip could baptize but it took an apostle-bishop to confirm. Peter and John went to Samaria and **“prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”** That gesture of laying on of hands was used to give the Holy Spirit, just like it is used to give the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

When we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation the bishop, or a priest delegated by the bishop, prays and lays hands upon those to be confirmed. In addition, the person is anointed on the forehead with the oil of Holy Chrism in the shape of a cross. Chrism is the fragrant oil that was used to anoint kings and priests in the Old Testament and is used for several sacraments in the Church. Holy Chrism reminds us that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a sweet and a healing balm to the soul.

It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us how to pray. The CCC refers to prayer as “The Battle of Prayer”. It is sometimes hard to pray. We must struggle with our own weaknesses and temptations to persevere in prayer. It is more difficult than ever to

be quiet and focus on something, especially prayer. While we should present our needs and problems to God in prayer, there is a danger of focusing too much on ourselves. We should focus on God, especially by praising and thanking Him. The psalms can be a great help. The verse we said in the Responsorial Psalm was: **“Let all the earth cry out to God with joy!”**

Many times, people complain that they don't have any warm feelings during prayer. Their prayer is dry and empty; they begin to think that prayer is not worth their time. We don't always have warm and uplifting feelings in any relationship; a lot of life is just routine. You know that there aren't always warm feelings in marriage or family relationships. We can't always be on an emotional high, but the relationship endures. The same is true with God. God is expecting us to persevere in prayer even when we don't feel that it is worth it. This is a test! Satan will always tell you that everything else, including our screens, is more important and more satisfying than prayer.

The same is true with love. In the Gospel today, Jesus told us how we know that we love Him. Jesus said, **“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”** Now, it is good to tell Jesus, and our Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit that we love them with words. Again remember, it is not warm feelings that determine our love; the feelings may be there, or they may not be there. Love is not a feeling, but an action. It is by obeying the will of God and resisting the temptations of the devil that we show our love for God. Still, it is not just a matter of obeying laws, even though they are a necessary guide, but they are meant to lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus.

This relationship with Jesus is not to be kept on a purely private basis. In the Second Reading, St. Peter reminded us: **“Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope.”** To do this we need to know Jesus and the teachings of our Catholic faith. The hope that He has given us, even in this world, but reaching into heaven, is something that we must share with others. If we live it and present it in a loving way, we will win souls for Christ.

We love our mothers and honor them on this special Sunday in May, Mary's month. They combine both the tender compassion of love with deeds that are often very difficult. Even those women not blessed with children have this motherly quality in their hearts. Mothers are willing to make sacrifices for their children, such as caring for the sick child even when they are tired and are not feeling so

well themselves. Pope St. John Paul spoke of the “**genius of women**”. By that, he meant the special gifts that women bring to the family and to the world. We look to our Blessed Mother as the perfect mother; we ask that her example and motherly care may bless all mothers on this Mother’s Day!