

I'm going to be brief today because we need to clean and sanitize the church between Masses...

I want to focus on those last words we heard from Jesus at the end of today's Gospel: "Know that I am with you always, until the end of the age." These words, along with the mystery of the ascension, take us directly into the reality of the Church...the mystery of the Church.

We live in a time that is "in between": as we used to say in the memorial acclamation, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." He is risen and alive, He shares this victory and new life with us now...but still we struggle, still we don't have the full picture. The kingdom of God is at hand for us, but it's still not fully established among God's people. If it were, the world would look a lot different, wouldn't it?

"In between" also applies to our situation right now, the limitations on how we celebrate together. We are able to be here together, but not all of us.

All through these trials of the last few weeks, He has been with us. Many have come to see that in new ways. Many have found new ways to strengthen their faith when the normal ways are not available. That is certainly a blessing that will stay with us.

Jesus is also quoted in our first reading: "You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth." We witness to Him very powerfully through acts of charity. What does that look like in our current situation? Some are choosing to attend Mass on a different day of the week instead of following their normal routine. Many of us are taking actions to protect one another, respecting the health concerns and fears of others, even if we're not on the same page.

When Jesus ascended to the heavens, they could no longer see Him in the same way. We haven't seen each other together as His Body, the Church...but we have been that Body of Christ all along. He has been with us all along. As the Body of Christ, we are still with each other even when we're apart. That includes those who are staying home due to health concerns, or because of our 25% seating limitation. We are still together because of the powerful bond we have in being united to Christ..." through Him, with Him, in Him" as we pray during every Mass.

Maybe all of this will remind us of those who are not with us even in normal times: those who cannot come due to illness or age, and those who choose not to come for a variety of reasons. Maybe this will inspire us to reach out to them. Maybe that's another blessing in all of this.

"Know that I am with you always...until the end of the age."

What does that mean to us in our personal walk with Christ?

What does that mean for our relationship with each other, as the Body of Christ?