

Sixth Sunday of Easter.

Are you a fan of sports teams? Do you miss watching major team sports on live TV? Now you can! ESPN started broadcasting games from the Korea Baseball Organization a few weeks ago. These are the first live sports games to air in the U.S. since the start of the pandemic. Everything looks normal and the same as usual except for the absence of the fans. Watching the games, I smiled at seeing the cheer leaders who were dancing facing the empty seats. They reminded me of the disciples of Jesus who were waiting for The Holy Spirit in their mists, since they looked convinced that the fans were with them. Of course the fans were, in fact, with them in spirit even though they couldn't be physically present.

Jesus said to his disciples, "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always." Even though we cannot see the Holy Spirit, we should be convinced that He is watching over us and is with us always.

The Archdiocese of Newark has been given direction to reopen churches in three phases. The good news is that the commencement of Phase One will be on this Sunday, May 17, 2020. The church will be reopened to parishioners for personal prayer.

We have been thirsty for God's Words and the Eucharist. We are not there yet. In the past, we habitually attended mass and heard the readings and took the Eucharist. Now everything has changed and we really long for God's Words and all the Sacraments. Going through Phase One, Two and Three, we will graciously receive them in our daily lives. Gradually, we will get to the point of being able to fully participate in the mass. I hope that it will be soon. It's the hope of all of us.

St. Peter said in today's second reading, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." We have to remember that this message was for Christians who were suffering from the persecution of the church. The situation was same as ours in this time of pandemic. We can have hope just as all the Christians had hope during the time of persecution. We hope to overcome this struggle with the help of the Holy Spirit. He is certainly with us always as our helper.

Fr. James Cho