

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

6th Sunday of Easter | For Sunday, May 17, 2020

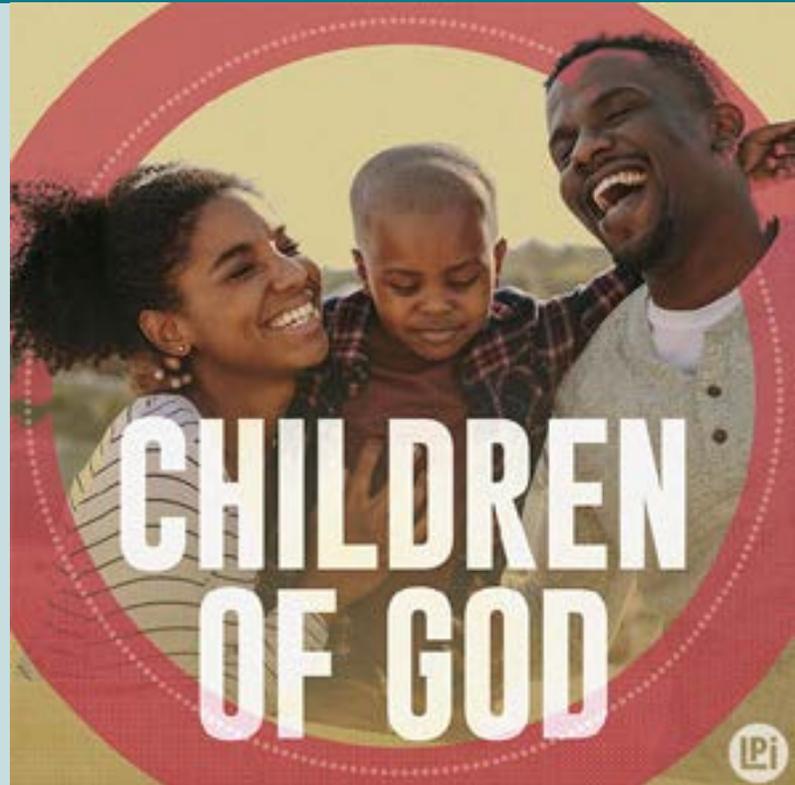
## A Reason for Our Hope

*Written by Angie Windnagle*

**Acts 8:5-8, 14-17**

**1 Peter 3:15-18**

**John 14:15-21**



When I was little, I came home from school one day after a lively lesson on saying yes to God in our lives and declared, "If Jesus were to come today and ask me to go with him, I would say yes and go right away!" My mother was rightfully cautious and explained that if anyone claiming to be Jesus wanted to take me, I should come ask her first. As a child, I was let down that she wasn't as excited to say yes to Jesus as I was. As an adult, I can laugh and appreciate her response. She knew I could easily be deceived and the likelihood of Jesus coming to me in person was pretty low.

In the Gospel we hear Jesus say to us, *"I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you..."* It is so striking to me that this gospel is being read during our current times. During a time of confusion, suffering, uncertainty, and for many isolation and loneliness, God the Father is actively caring for us and telling each of us, *you are not alone*. The language of orphans and hope finds its answer in God's plan for humanity when Jesus says, *"I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I in you."* Despite all the failings of human history and our own failings, we are called to truly become part of God's family as His children through Baptism. We are called to be able to emphatically say yes to God as his children, no matter where it takes us.

The disciples knew this well and lived it boldly as we see in the first reading. The Holy Spirit enabled them to rise above worldly sufferings and persecutions and work miracles in Christ's name. In many ways, their courage is tied to their hope. St. Augustine once said that, *"hope has two daughters, anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and courage to see that they do not remain the same."* The boldness of the disciples came from the love of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised to give us all. The same Holy Spirit received at Confirmation. To be people of hope, we are called to be people of love and courage. I'm reminded of this when I read St. Peter's letter in the second reading. We may not see Jesus face to face as I was expecting as a child, but we do experience his voice and truth through the Church he founded. St. Peter encourages the faithful to be ready to give an explanation to those who ask for a reason for this hope. We ought to be always ready, in love and gentleness, to proclaim the gospel, even if it is difficult. It helps us ask the question: Am I living a life rooted in hope to the point that I can declare boldly like a child that God is for us and not against us?

In a real way, we have the unique opportunity to be online disciples in our world today with so many facets of society moved to digital platforms. God may not send us His Spirit to raise the dead as He did with the early Church, and we may not experience persecution, but He is calling us to raise souls from the brink of despair by our words and presence today. We are marked as members of a divine family and no longer tied to this earth. He has promised we won't be left orphans and has sent the Advocate to give us the strength to live in the hope of this promise. What will we do with it? Will those we interact with online, even in the small hidden ways, see this witness? Will they notice something different about us? The answers to our most profound questions about our situation have already been answered in the love of Christ. This saving love is the hope we are called to embody and share with the world. Let us do it boldly, and with the hope and trust of true children of God.

*Angie Windnagle*

## PRAYER

O love eternal, my soul needs  
and chooses you eternally!  
Ah, come Holy Spirit, and inflame  
our hearts with your love!  
To love - or to die! To die - and to love!  
To die to all other love in order  
to live in Jesus' love,  
so that we may not die eternally.  
But that we may live in your eternal love,  
O Savior of our souls, we eternally sing,  
Live, Jesus! Jesus, I love! Live, Jesus,  
whom I love!  
Jesus, I love, Jesus who lives  
and reigns forever and ever.  
Amen.

*- Prayer of St. Francis de Sales*