**Deacon Steve’s Reflection on the Sunday Readings**

**May 6, 2018 – Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48 Psalm 98: 1-4**

**1 John 4: 7-10 John 15: 9-17**

 The First Letter of John is, in many ways, an encapsulation of John’s Gospel, no more so than the brief quote from today’s second reading. In just a few short verses, the author summarizes the essence of God’s infinite love and saving plan for humanity. John tells his readers: *“In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him.”* When we, who have the benefit of centuries of scientific advancement, including such technological wonder as space travel and the Hubble Telescope and other instruments that unfold and reveal the vastness of the cosmos, consider God’s love for us, His humble creation, we can only be amazed.

 In the reading from the Gospel of John, the extent of God’s love is realized in the ultimate gift of His Son, who gave his life in expiation for our sins. Our Lord Jesus Christ called for us to live in imitation of God’s love, in the foreshadowing of his passion and death. He told his disciples: *“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”*

 In just a few days, we will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, when Our Lord rose into the heavens to take his place at the right hand of the Father. However, as he promised them, he would not leave them alone; rather he would send them another Paraclete, an intercessor for them as they journeyed in faith. The Advocate is, of course, the Holy Spirit, who would descend upon the disciples on Pentecost, emboldening them to go forth to fearlessly proclaim the Gospel. Filled with the Spirit, they would share the Good News of the Lord, not just to a few, but to all men and women. As we heard in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles: *“in truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.”*

 Throughout the centuries, countless disciples, saints and martyrs, have given witness to God, who is Father, Son and Spirit. Let us join with those who have gone before, in proclaiming the truth of the eternal love and compassion of God. As we heard in today’s Responsorial Psalm: *“The LORD has made his salvation known: In the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice.”*

 Deacon Steven K. Szmutko