

A NOTE TO PARENTS

For the rest of the Easter season, our focus is *the Church*, culminating in the Feast of Pentecost that ends the Great Fifty Days and is often called “the birthday of the Church.” As we so often do in the Church’s year, we are now jumping out of chronological order, as, in the period before Pentecost, we read in the Book of Acts of the Church’s growth and expansion throughout the Roman world, and its joyous sense of the continuing presence of the Risen Lord in its midst. That is our way of saying that *the* crucial event for the birth of the Church is the Resurrection, even more than the descent of the Spirit. The Church is not an institution that was given a start-up grant when the Spirit came on Pentecost. The Church is the Body of Christ: it is the way his risen life takes flesh in the world until the moment when he comes again.

Your child may need help in understanding what we mean by “the Church.” Children (like many adults) tend to think of the church primarily as a building, or else as the community of familiar people who gather in our particular parish each Sunday morning. Neither of these views is wrong; but both are incomplete. The Church includes buildings, which are often distinctive and recognizable. Why do we build them as we do? Would it be better to build them some other way? How? And the Church includes people, certainly—people we know and love, and people we don’t know, who are nonetheless our brothers and sisters in Baptism. Other congregations, other denominations, some very different from ours, are also the Church. What makes us the Church? It is our faith, our Baptism, our union with Jesus and each other ... and our willingness to offer ourselves to each other and the world in love, as Jesus offered himself. How is our family doing this? How are our parish, and our neighbors, doing this? How can we do it better? Talk this over with your children—listen to their ideas. And do not forget that the Church is also all those who have gone before us—the Church Triumphant—the Holy City which the Book of Revelation is painting for us week by week, where we will be invited to rejoice forever at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

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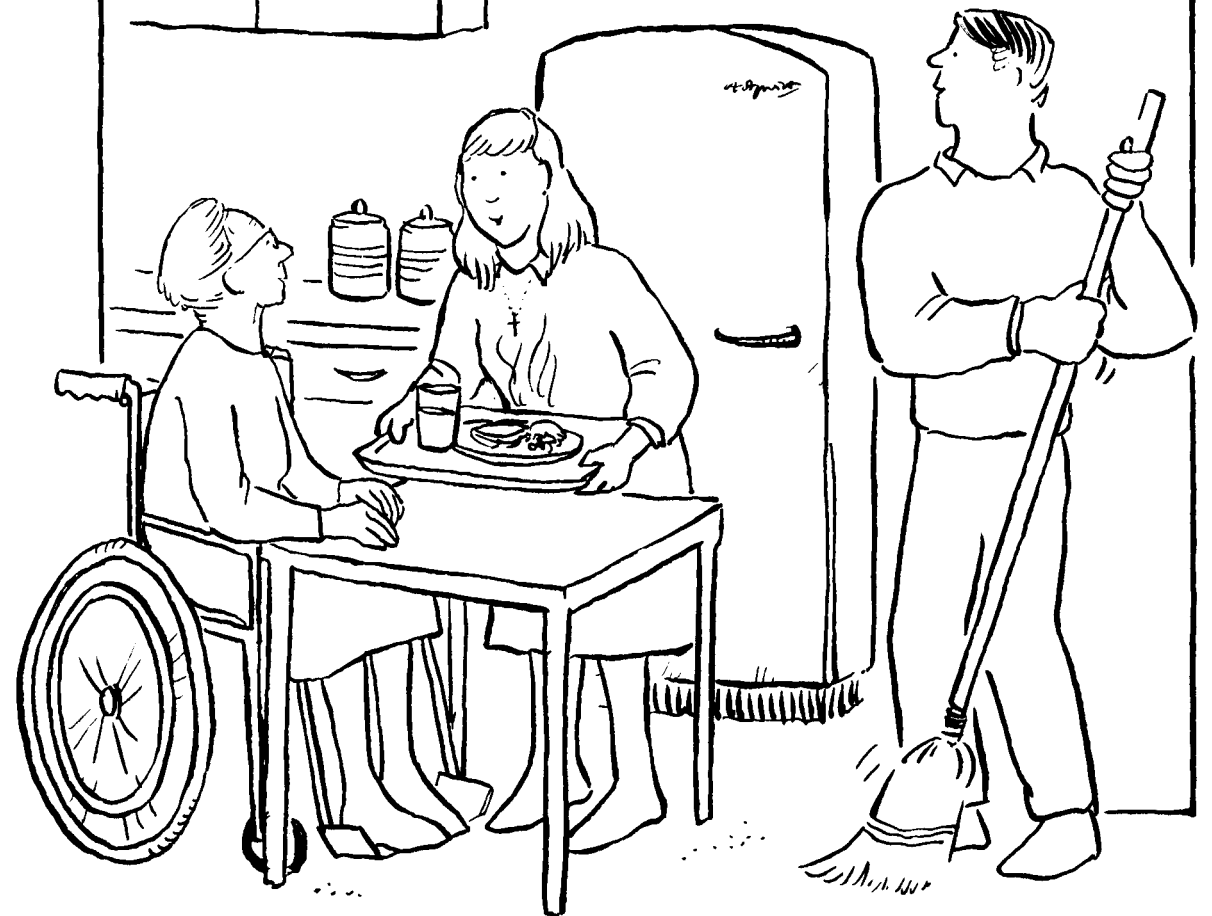


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Year C
5TH SUNDAY
of EASTER

Jesus said, “I have a new commandment for you:
LOVE ONE ANOTHER,
as I have loved you.”

JOHN 13:34



For a while after Jesus rose from the dead, his friends sometimes saw him.



He ate with them and talked with them. They were full of love and joy.



Then things changed. They no longer saw Jesus. But they still felt his love in their hearts.



Jesus is alive in us, too. He helps us share his love and do his work.



Jesus loved us so much that he came to live and die with us. Now he is alive for ever, and we share his new life when we believe in him and love him. He wants us to spread his love, and love others the way he loved us.



Fill the church with people who love Jesus. Draw people going out from the church, to do God's work of love in the world.