



Sunday May 10, 2026

Sixth Sunday of Easter

So, my friends, we are now entering a season of change and some goodbyes. Every year between May and June, high school and college students across the country are moving on. Yes, about 3.9 million high school students will receive their diplomas and 2 million will receive their bachelor's degree. What an accomplishment. Let's not forget the millions of those children graduating from kindergarten and those tweens are going to be moving now up into high school. We say goodbye to what has been completed and say hello to the next space of our life in many different ways. About 20 to 30% of all weddings in the US will take place in the next two months. There's a lot of change, a lot of lead taking happening in new steps are in the air.

So today our gospel lesson talks to us about change. Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure and the arrival of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' ascension into heaven is a feast day that will be observed this Thursday and these teachings prepare us for the gift of the Holy Spirit that we celebrate on Pentecost in just two weeks. Today, Jesus assures us, I will not leave you orphaned because Jesus promises to send us another advocate, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit which is the Spirit of Jesus. Advocate comes from the Greek word meaning and signifies someone who comes to a person's defense, a helper in court, a lawyer in our modern ears. The work of the advocate that Jesus intends for us incorporates many meanings. The advocate is our counselor, our comforter, our helper, our intercessor, are the most common ways to interpret it. An advocate is a person who you call to your side to help be with you, to strengthen you, and today on Mother's Day is the perfect time to celebrate the advocates. If a mother isn't an advocate then I don't know who she is. I have another name for the Holy Spirit besides advocate thanks to my daughter Hannah. This is Hannah's favorite stuffy. I don't know if you can see it. She made it with her when she was very young, a bear, a big bear and then she took two little bears which I assume represent her and her brother and she placed it at the bottom, it was at the bit of her bed and there it stayed for many, many years. So, Hannah started to call me Mama Bear. Now, do I look like a bear to you? I consider myself pretty calm, quiet, well-mannered person but you mess with my kids, they're in



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danger, all you see different sides to me, right? Mother, say am I right? Don't touch with my cubs if you want to see, you want to live to see another day.

The prophet Hosea even warns Israel as they begin to drift and fall into idle worship that God will fall upon them like a bear, robbed of her cubs. Jesus is telling us that God in a way is our Mama Bear, another part of the job of the advocate. When Hannah was struggling in school with learning disabilities and ADHD, who was there to fight the Board of Education to get her services that she needed? Mama Bear. When Andrew was hospitalized, who visited every day, didn't sleep a wink, brought favorite snacks, pursued doctors endlessly. That's right. Mama Bear, Mama Bear. Who laid down the laws about video games, curfews and chores? Who made you apologize when you were wrong? Made you write those thank-you notes, who read you every night, who dried your tears and who corrected you when you were going wrong. That's right, Mama Bear. But a Mama Bear does more than this. I once asked Hannah what her greatest Mama Bear moment was and she told me of a time when she was a teenager and found herself very depressed, bullied, and she didn't want to live anymore. I held her in my arms in that moment and told her how much I had waited all my life for a little girl. Before she was born, the sonogram said that I was having another boy. But when she came out in the midwife's head, it's a girl I was thrilled beyond belief. One of the happiest days of my life. Hannah told me that when she heard that story about how much she was wanted it gave her the will to live. And that's what Mama Bear do - give us the will for living. And today I celebrate the heavenly birthday of my Mama Bear, who would be 101 years old today.

Everybody needs a Mama Bear, both human and in divine forms. What Mama Bear in human form and in divine form has taken action in your life? What has Mama Bear done for you? We all need to note and feel the presence of Mama Bear in our lives, don't we? Especially in our endings and our new beginnings, we need the assurance that God is indeed with us in all the changes of our lives. Because the world we live in can be an incredibly intimidating place, even in the best of circumstances. Enter God, the advocate, the Mama Bear, because people need that assurance of God with us and for us.



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One of the worst feelings in the world is the feeling that you're facing the world all alone by yourself. No one to help in a time of trouble. No one with whom to share the joy or the happiness that comes your way. No one to offer guidance. No one to help to know what is right and what is wrong. The sure promise of Jesus that we heard today is that he will not leave us alone no matter what. He will not leave us orphans. He will come to us, protect us, counsel us, guide us and be like a Mama Bear to us. So, on this day, this Mother's Day, I invite us all to claim the memories and again I ask what has Mama Bear done for you in your life? Looking back, what memories come to the surface for you? Who loved you? Who reminded you that you were worthy? Who protected you? Who pushed you and challenged you? Who claimed you as their own? How has God entered your life as Mama Bear protecting you and leading you away from danger and standing up for you and loving you so fiercely through the trials and hardships of life?

So, today we thank God for the advocates that Jesus sends us and thank God for all the Mama Bears in our lives. In a world where there is indeed 153 million orphans, 673 million hungry people, 170 million displaced people, a world scarred by war in division and lack of love, even loneliness and despair, we need to call upon and unleash from ourselves to that divine Mama Bear energy upon our planet. And no matter what you experienced in your life with the mother figures that surrounded you for good or ill, there is a divine Mama Bear who claims you as her own and will not let you go. So, today however or whether or not you celebrate this holiday, whatever your circumstances, remember this, you are loved. You are loved deeply, you are wanted, you are enveloped in that amazing loving energy because of Jesus. So, have a blessed Mother's Day and we say thank you to Fine Advocate Mother Bear and to all the human mother bears in our midst. Thank you for all you do. Amen.