

May 14, 2023  
6th Sunday of Easter  
John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

### **Background:**

This Gospel passage follows after the Gospel text read last week. It, too, comes from the last discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper. This short text contains many important themes worthy of reflection. The connection between love and keeping God's commandments is presented in both the first and last verse of the text. Obedience is not love. The eldest brother of the prodigal son was obedient. When one loves, they strive to do what pleases the one they love.

The text also speaks of God's presence to those who love. Throughout the text, John presents some insights into the relationship of God as Trinity. The intimate relationship of the Father and Jesus is expressed. At the same time there is a sense in the text that the Father and Jesus are distinct from one another. The text also includes a reference to the Spirit. While this suggests a relationship between the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit, it is not yet clearly defined. They are connected in how they are present in the world, but they are also distinct one from the other.

As was stated last week, it seems to be unclear whether Jesus is preparing the disciples for his departure in death or for his departure from earth in the Ascension. Jesus' departure will leave the disciples with a sense of loss. He reassures them that he will not leave them orphaned. They will find His presence not by looking outside of themselves, but within.

Lastly, it may be helpful to be aware that John's Gospel reflects a culture where society was viewed as being separated into two groups: one's extended family and everyone else. Those outside of the family were presumed to be a possible threat. Hence, the text casts the world as distinctly different and separate from the favored loved members of the community.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Where do you experience your most loving relationships? Where do you experience your most loyal relationships? Are they the same?
2. How do you experience the obedience and loyalty within yourself?
3. Do you know people who seem to live in the Spirit of truth?
4. Have you ever felt abandoned? Does that affect your relationship with others? Does it affect your relationship with God?
5. Jesus says that he is in the Father, and He and the Father are in you as a disciple. How do you experience this? Do you have a desire to experience this more deeply?
6. Jesus also talks about the world as being incapable of accepting or recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit. How do you understand what Jesus is saying about the world?
7. Last Sunday, Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father and that will be enough. Where does this text suggest that Philip should look for the presence of the Father?
8. As you hear the text today, what do you hear God saying to you? What do you want to say to God in response?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to [fr.paul.gallagher.ofm@gmail.com](mailto:fr.paul.gallagher.ofm@gmail.com).

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### **Excerpts from the Readings for May 14, 2023, the Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them.  
With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing.  
For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed or crippled people were cured. There was great joy in that city.  
Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.  
Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.  
Shout joyfully to God, all the earth, sing praise to the glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise.  
Say to God, "Tremendous are your deeds! Let all on earth worship you and sing praise to your name!"  
Come and see the works of God, his tremendous deeds among the children of Adam.  
He has changed the sea into dry land; through the river they passed on foot; let us rejoice in him.  
He rules by his might forever. Hear now, all you who fear God, while I declare what he has done for me.  
Blessed be God who refused me not my prayer or his kindness!

Beloved: Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts.  
Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame.  
For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil.  
For Christ also suffered for sins once, for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God.  
Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit.

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

**Excerpts from Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20; 1 Peter 3:15-18; and John 14:15-21**

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for May 14th, the sixth Sunday of Easter. In the Gospel from John, Jesus tells his disciples, "I will ask the Father to give you another Advocate to be with you always. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him."

The other readings also have references to the proclaiming of the Word, the revelation of the Father, and the coming of the Spirit. In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Philip proclaimed the Christ to the city of Samaria, and with one accord, the crowds paid attention. When the apostles heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John, who went and prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit. Psalm 66 declares, "Come and see the works of God, his tremendous deeds among the children of Adam. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy." In the second reading, from Peter's first letter, he writes, "Be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope. Christ suffered for sins, that he might lead you to God. Put to death in the flesh, he was brought to life in the Spirit."

The Gospel for today picks up where we left off last week, in the middle of John's chapter 14, which is the beginning of the Last Supper discourses. These discourses convey John's extended version of Jesus' teaching at the last supper. May the joy of Easter remain with you!

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!