

May 25, 2025
6th Sunday of Easter
John 14:23-29

Jesus said to his disciples: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. Yet the word you hear is not mine; it comes from the Father who sent me.

This much have I told you while I was still with you; the Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will instruct you in everything, and remind you of all that I told you. ‘Peace’ is my farewell to you, my peace is my gift to you; I do not give it to you as the world gives peace. Do not be distressed or fearful. You have heard me say, ‘I go away for a while, and I come back to you.’ If you truly loved me you would rejoice to have me go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I tell you this now, before it takes place, so that when it takes place you may believe.”

Background:

For the last five weeks the scripture readings of the Easter Season have reflected on our relationship to the risen Lord. Next Sunday we will celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord, and the following week the Feast of Pentecost. The Gospel text for this Sunday offers a glimpse into the early Christians’ first reflection on the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By introducing the role of the Holy Spirit, the text also prepares for the celebration of the great Feast of Pentecost.

The text itself is part of John’s Last Supper account. John’s account of the Last Supper began with Jesus washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:1-12). It continued with Jesus’ request that they follow his example, the betrayal of Judas, Jesus telling the apostles that he will be with them just a short time, the prediction of Peter’s denial, Jesus asking that the disciples not let their hearts be troubled, the promise of an Advocate, and reassurance that Jesus will not leave them orphans. This long discourse is coming to its conclusion in the Gospel text for today.

(There are few verses in the discourse that do follow the text for today. “I will no longer speak much with you for the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me, but the world must know that I love the Father and that I do just as the Father has commanded me. Get up, let us go.” (John 14:30-31))

The Gospel text is concluding Jesus’ instruction to the disciples and is preparing them for his leaving them and the events of the Passion. Even though John’s community has been reflecting on Jesus’ departure and the passion for some time, they are still dealing with Jesus’ absence.

They relied on the presence of those who had personally known Jesus to help guide them in their new way of life. When the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Christians interpreted this as an expression of God’s anger and anticipated that Jesus’ triumphant return would take place soon. When Jesus did not return, and those who had experienced the living Jesus also began to die which lead to new questions and doubts within the community. Many did not endure.

In John’s Gospel, the Advocate (Holy Spirit) is described as having at least three roles. The Advocate is the continuing presence of Jesus on earth after the ascension, and the source of truth, and a source of consolation and peace. “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 it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you, the comforter and advocate.” (John 14:17) And lastly in the text for today the Advocate reminds the community of the things that Jesus had taught, and testifies to the truth on behalf of Jesus (John 14:26).

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you experienced the death of another that affected how you lived, celebrated, or thought about God?
2. Who are the “wisdom people” in your life, that seem to speak and live the spirit of Jesus’ love for you and others?
3. In the first verse of this Gospel Jesus says: “Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.” How do you experience the truth of Jesus’ promise to you?
4. Where do you find the presence of the Holy Spirit?
5. How is the peace that Jesus brings different from how people normally speak of peace? Where is that kind of peace present in your life? How are you striving to live in that peace?
6. John writes his Gospel to respond to the doubt, fears, and questions of the Christians of his day. Do you experience doubt or questions in your life?
7. Can you talk with God openly and honestly about your experience of the Holy Spirit working in your life, your own need for reassurance, or some thought or feeling that arose in you from this Gospel text?

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 annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclom.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for May 25, 2025, the Sixth Sunday of Easter

Some who had come from Judea were instructing the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved." Because there arose dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem about this question. The apostles and elders, in agreement with the whole church, decided to choose representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. This is the letter delivered by them: "To the brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia of Gentile origin: Greetings. Since we have heard that some of our number who went out without any mandate from us have upset you with their teachings and disturbed your peace of mind, we have decided to choose representatives and to send them to you along with Barnabas and Paul, who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we are sending Judas and Silas who will also convey this same message by word of mouth: It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage. If you keep free of these, you will be doing what is right. Farewell."

*O God, let all the nations praise you!
May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us.
So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation.
May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity;
the nations on the earth you guide. May all the peoples praise you, O God!
May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him!*

The angel took me in spirit and showed me the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, clear as crystal. It had a massive, high wall, with twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed and on which were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. Three gates were facing east, three north, three south, and three west. The wall of the city had twelve courses of stones as its foundation, on which were inscribed the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. "I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

Excerpts from Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Psalm 67:2-8; Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23; and John 14:23-29

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for May 25th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The Gospel, from John, is again taken from during the Last Supper, like last week. Jesus says, "I am going away and I will come back to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you." The other readings also have direct references to a departure and the sending of a representative to return and restore peace, and to a vision of the radiant new holy city coming down from heaven. In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Paul and Barnabas discover there have been conflicting teachings about circumcision made to the Gentiles. They depart for a time to consult the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and these send Judas Barsabbas and Silas back with Paul and Barnabas, with a letter to resolve the upset and restore peace of mind. Psalm 67 exclaims, "May God let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth." In the second reading, from Revelation, John writes, "The angel showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, gleaming with the splendor of God."

This Sunday is the fifth and last consecutive Sunday where the Easter season readings are taken from Acts, Revelation, and John, in that order. This Sunday the readings reflect the approaching end of the Easter season, where in one more week we will celebrate Jesus' return to heaven at the Ascension. Things are in the midst of transitions and changes, which can lead to doubts and misunderstandings. And again the readings are out of sequence from the natural timeline of the events. The first reading's scene happens after Jesus' ascension and after the conversion of Paul. Through Paul and Barnabas God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, and at this point some teachings needed clarification. The second reading describing John's vision in Revelation was written years after the events of the first reading. John sees the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, gleaming in the radiant light of God the Father himself. The Gospel scene occurs in

Jerusalem, at the Last Supper. Jesus tells the disciples, "I am going away and I will come back to you. Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

Joe

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