

May 26, 2019
6th Sunday of Easter
John 14:23-29

Jesus said to his disciples: “Anyone who loves me will be true to my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him and make our dwelling place with him always. He who 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 Paraclete, 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:

This is the 6th Sunday of Easter. For the last five weeks the scripture readings 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 is the Feast of Pentecost. The gospel text for this Sunday offers a glimpse into the early Christians’ first reflections on the role of the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. By introducing the role of the Holy Spirit, the text also prepares us to celebrate the great Feast of Pentecost.

The text itself is part of John’s the Last Supper account. From that perspective, Jesus’ instruction would help the disciples prepare for the events of the Passion. The people of John’s community a generation later were also dealing with the absence of Jesus in another way. They relied on the presence of those who had personally known Jesus to help guide them in a 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 soon follow. When Jesus did not return, and those who had experienced the living Jesus also began to die, questions and doubts arose within the community. Many did not stay on.

In John’s gospel, the Paraclete (Holy Spirit) is described as having at least three roles. The Paraclete is the continuing presence of Jesus on earth after the ascension, and the source of truth. “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 Paraclete 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. Who are the “wisdom people” in your life?
2. When I think of how I have been affected by the loss of significant people in my life...
3. In the first verse of this gospel Jesus says: “Anyone who loves me will be true to my word, and my Father will love him; we will come to him and make our dwelling place with him always.” How do you experience the truth of Jesus’ promise to you in these words?
4. I believe that I experience the working of the Holy Spirit in my life...
5. When Jesus in this gospel reassures the disciples of a peace that the world cannot give...
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 within 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

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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 26, 2019, 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 showed me the holy city Jerusalem 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