

May 17, 2020  
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 it. But you know it, because it 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:**

In last week's gospel, Philip said to Jesus, "Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." (John 14:8) This gospel passage continues Jesus' response to that statement. This text too, comes from the last discourse of Jesus.

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, but he is not the example of love that Jesus asks us to emulate. However, when one loves, they do what pleases the one they love. The second part of verse 19 speaks of the presence of God to those who do 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 especially in verses 16, 20, and 21. At the same time, there is also a sense that they are distinct from one another. The text also includes a reference to the Spirit in verses 16 and 17. While the text speaks of an intimate relationship between the three, it is not clearly defined.

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. All those outside of the family were presumed to be a possible threat. Hence the text casts outsiders as distinctly different and separate from the favored loved members of the community.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. What is your present experience of loving and supportive relationships?
2. How has your experience been affected by the current encouragement to stay at home and practice social distancing?
3. Do you experience obedience as a response to some authority outside of yourself, or as an inner expression of who you are, the commitments you have made, and your desire to be faithful?
4. Where do you experience people committed to the Spirit of truth? Where do you experience people using lies and deception? How does this affect your relationship with them?
5. Jesus 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?
6. Last Sunday, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, and that would be enough for them. Where does this text suggest that Philip should look for the presence of the Father?
7. Can you take some time talk with God openly and honestly about your feelings and desire to be obedient out of your love for God, yourself, and your neighbors?

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](mailto:annemarie.lom@gmail.com)

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#### **Excerpts from the Readings for May 17, 2020, 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**