

Scripture Study

Sixth Sunday of Easter – Cycle A



Opening prayer

Acts 8:5-8,14-17

(Ps 66:1-7,16,20)

1 Peter 3:15-18

John 14:15-21

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's reading takes place at the Last Supper (John chapters 13—17), and is a continuation of last week's reading.
- Now that Jesus is about "to pass from this world to the Father" (John 13:1), he explains to his own how he will continue to reveal himself to them. He promises them that he will send the Holy Spirit, "another Advocate," or Paraclete. The Greek word, *paracletos*, means one who stands beside and defends. It can also mean consoler, comforter, intercessor, mediator or spokesman.
- Jesus had often promised to send the Spirit (John 14:26; 15:36; 16:7-14; Matthew 10:20), and he does so in a limited way on the evening of Easter (John 20:22).
- The fullness of the Holy Spirit, however, will be sent by Jesus to his disciples 50 days after his Resurrection on Pentecost. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus will be with his Church always until he comes again in glory (verse 18).

Questions:

- In the 1st Reading, how do we see the Holy Spirit acting in the lives of the early believers? What Sacrament is anticipated in verses 14-17 (see CCC 1287-1288)?
- In the 2nd Reading, St. Peter instructs us that we are to be ready to defend and explain our Faith at any time. In what way are we to do this (verse 16a)? What is the immediate reason for doing so (verse 16b-17)? What is the ultimate purpose for doing so (verse 18)?
- In the Gospel Reading, how are the disciples to show love to each other (John 13:34)? To Jesus (John 14:15)? Why is this idea repeated four times (verses 15:21, 23—24)?
- What do you learn about the Holy Spirit in verses 16-17 and 25-27? What is the relationship of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to the Christian? To each other? How has the Holy Spirit revealed Jesus in your life?
- What is the difference between how *Jesus* gives peace and how the *world* does?
- Where do you need Jesus' peace? How can you find peace in this reading?
- How at home are the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in your life? Are they more like owners or temporary guests?
- Of all the promise made here (verses 16-18, 21, 23, 26-27), which means the most to you? Why?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 243, 687, 692, 729, 788, 2466, 2615, 2671

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!

Those who are led by the Holy Spirit have true ideas; that is why so many ignorant people are wiser than the learned. The Holy Spirit is light and strength. --St. John Vianney

"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid"

Scripture: *John 14:15-21*

Meditation: What makes us both truly human and truly like God? Love which is unselfish, undying, and wholly directed to the good of others. It is love that unites us in an unbreakable bond of fidelity and fellowship with others. Jesus loved his own until the very end of his passion and death on the cross (John 13:1). From the very beginning of creation God said: *it is not good that man should be alone* (Genesis 2:18). We were created in love for love – to be a community of loving persons, just as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are united in love. John Henry Newman said: *We love because it is our nature to love, and it is our nature because God the Holy Spirit has made it our nature.* Jesus speaks to his disciples of the inseparable bond of love between himself and the Father, and of their love for humankind. In Jesus we see the fulness of God's love and how God's love is directed to our well-being. *In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him* (1 John 4:9).

How do we know that God truly loves each of us? In the cross we see the proof of God's love for us and the incredible price God was willing to pay for our redemption. Jesus gave up his life that we might have life – abundant, everlasting life with God – a life of



love and unity with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit forever. Through the cross Jesus opened a new way of relationship for us as adopted sons and daughters of God – his beloved children (Romans 8:14-17). Jesus calls his disciples to walk in his way of love through obedience to the will of the Father. True love is more than sentiment or good intentions. As important as these may be they are not the proof of sincere love. True love for God is expressed in obedience and obedience is expressed in love.

Jesus promised to give his followers the best of gifts, the Holy Spirit as their Counselor and Helper. How does the Holy Spirit help us? *Counselor* is a legal term for one who defends someone against an adversary and who guides that person during the ordeal of trial. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Helper who brings us safely through the challenges and adversities we must face in this life. The Holy Spirit is also the Giver of life – the life of God – and the One who guides us

in the way of truth. We can never stop learning because the Spirit leads us more and more into the knowledge of God's love and truth. Jesus also promised his followers the gift of peace. Peace is more than the absence of conflict or trouble. Peace includes everything which makes for our highest good. Trust in God, faith in his promises, and obedience to his word lead us to peace and safety in God's presence. That is why a Christian need not fear or be troubled by anything. What can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?

"O God, you are the unsearchable abyss of peace, the ineffable sea of love, the fountain of blessings and the bestower of affection, who sends peace to those who receive it. Open to us this day the sea of your love and water us with abundant streams from the riches of your grace and from the most sweet springs of your kindness. Make us children of quietness and heirs of peace; enkindle in us the fire of your love; sow in us your fear; strengthen our weakness by your power; bind us closely to you and to each other in our firm and indissoluble bond of unity."
(ancient prayer from Syrian Clementine liturgy)

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