

6th Sunday of Easter, Year C

GOSPEL

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Jesus said to his disciples:

‘If anyone loves me he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him,
and we shall come to him and make our home with him.
Those who do not love me do not keep my words.
And my word is not my own:
it is the word of the one who sent me.
I have said these things to you while still with you;
but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all I have said to you.
Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you,
a peace the world cannot give,
this is my gift to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
You heard me say: I am going away, and shall return.
If you loved me you would have been glad to know that I am
going to the Father,
for the Father is greater than I.
I have told you this now before it happens,
so that when it does happen you may believe.’

(John 14:23-29)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The meaning of the word *advocate* is ‘one who is summoned to help another’.
- Another term commonly used for the Holy Spirit is *Paraclete*, which comes from a Greek term meaning ‘called to the side of’ and so has the same meaning as *advocate*.
- In the Hebrew Scriptures, peace was one of the distinguishing marks of the time of the Messiah—a time when swords would be made into ploughshares (Isaiah 2:4) and the wolf would live with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6). Jesus’ gift of peace confirms that he is the longed-for Messiah.

EXPLORING THE WORD

Jesus has alluded to the fact that he is going away but that he will one day return. In the meantime, the disciples—the community to whom John is writing his gospel—are living in the ‘in-between times’. Jesus has come once in the flesh and has promised to return at the end of the world, so this instruction is a continuation of the teaching on how disciples should live out their faith in Jesus’ absence: they must keep his word, the word of God. ‘And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us’ (John 1:14).

They will not be alone in this task, as Jesus has promised to send the Advocate or the Holy Spirit, who will continue to unfold the word as the Church grows and meets new situations and challenges.

- You could look at the first reading from Acts, which highlights one such situation.
- In conferring the gift of peace on his disciples, Jesus is preparing them for his departure and his absence. This will be a trial for the disciples, but the peace of Christ and the Holy Spirit will help them to understand his return to the Father and to be confident that they too will one day make that journey.
- How do you cope with the ‘absence’ of Jesus? In what ways do you experience Christ’s presence?
- How do you experience the Spirit in your life?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.’ What aspects of life frighten you?
- How do you experience the ‘peace the world cannot give’?
- Reflect back on a period in your life when you were anxious, troubled or afraid. How did the situation resolve itself? In what ways did you experience a sense of peace after the turmoil? Share your reflections with others.
- Try to stand up for someone this week who may be in need of a defender. Take on the role of an advocate. Alternatively, you could try to bring the gift of peace to someone whose heart is troubled or afraid.
- This week, use today’s prayer after Communion:
*Almighty and ever living God,
who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ,
increase in us we pray, the fruits of the paschal Sacrament
and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food.*

