

## 6th Sunday of Easter, Year A

### GOSPEL

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Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.  
I shall ask the Father,  
and he will give you another Advocate  
to be with you for ever,  
that Spirit of truth  
whom the world can never receive  
since it neither sees nor knows him;  
but you know him,  
because he is with you, he is in you.  
I will not leave you orphans;  
I will come back to you.  
In a short time the world will no longer see me;  
but you will see me,  
because I live and you will live.  
On that day you will understand that I am in my Father  
and you in me and I in you.  
Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them  
will be one who loves me;  
and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father,  
and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

(John 14:15-21)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The word *advocate* means 'called to the side of' and thus is often used to describe a mediator or assistant in a lawsuit.
- Some translations of the Bible use the word *paraclete* instead of *advocate*; others use the word *counselor* or *comforter*.
- In John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus himself (14:17, 26), recalling things the earthly Jesus taught or revealing things he was unable to convey. In John's view, this spiritual knowledge or insight, unavailable until after Jesus' death and resurrection, makes Christian faith and understanding fully possible.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

This text again alerts the disciples to that time when Jesus will no longer be with them. His departure will be a severe challenge to their faith, and Jesus gives voice to the challenge: 'If you love me you will keep my commandments.' This challenging call to follow the commandments of Jesus is accompanied by a gift—the gift of someone else, the Advocate, who will be by their side during that interim period between the two comings. Jesus does promise to return, and in the meantime, his presence and that of the Father live on in the love that is to be the way of life of the Christian. The Holy Spirit is not a thing apart from God and Jesus but the bond of love between them, and the believer is drawn into this love and becomes a part of it through living the way of Christ. Through the Spirit, Jesus remains forever present to the Church, and all Christians are brought into the very life of God.

Contemplate the ways you experience the life and love of the Spirit of God in the world:

- in nature and human relationships
- in society
- in personal prayer
- in the Church and its liturgy.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- When have you felt abandoned or left behind?
- What, for you, are the key commandments of Jesus?
- Who have been those people who have helped you through difficult times?
- Recall an experience of being supported by someone in a time of critical need. Share your memories of what form that support took and the impact it had on you.
- Be 'life-giving' to someone this week. Be an advocate, a counselor or comforter to someone in need.
- Pray to the Holy Spirit this week:

*Come Holy Spirit, renew me with your gifts.  
Heal my brokenness, pour down your wisdom.  
Instill your peace within me, inspire my every need.  
Amen.*

