

**GOSPEL**

JOHN 14:23-29

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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

1. Jesus offers us the gift of peace, a peace the world cannot give. Have you experienced this peace? Where and how has it been in your life?
2. Jesus promises us the gift of his Holy Spirit, the Advocate. How can we be more open to the Holy Spirit in our lives? Is it possible to experience more of the Holy Spirit?

**A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS**

Today's Gospel takes us back to the Upper Room. During the Last Supper, before confronting his passion and death on the cross, Jesus promises the Apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit, who will have the task of teaching and recalling [Jesus'] words to the community of disciples. Jesus says: "the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to

you" (Jn 14:26). Teach and recall. This is what the Holy Spirit does in our hearts.

At the moment in which he is about to return to the Father, Jesus foretells of the coming of the Spirit who will first teach the disciples to understand the Gospel ever more fully, in order to welcome it in their existence and to render it living and operative by their witness. While he is about to entrust to the Apostles — which in fact means "envoys" — the mission of taking the Gospel to all the world, Jesus promises that they will not be alone. The Holy Spirit, the Counsellor, will be with them, and will be beside them, moreover, will be within them, to protect and support them. Jesus returns to the Father but continues to accompany and teach his disciples through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The second aspect of the Holy Spirit's mission consists in helping the Apostles to remember Jesus' words. The Spirit has the task of reawakening the memory, recalling Jesus' words. The divine Teacher has already communicated all that he intended to entrust to the Apostles: with Him, the Word made flesh, the revelation is complete. The Spirit will recall Jesus' teachings in the various concrete circumstances of life, so that they may be put into practice. That is precisely what still happens today in the Church, guided by the light and the power of the Holy Spirit, so that he may bring to everyone the gift of salvation, which is the love and mercy of God. For example, each day when you read — as I have advised you — a passage, a passage of the Gospel, ask the Holy Spirit: "Let me understand and remember these words of Jesus". Then read the passage, every day... But first the prayer to the Spirit, who is in our heart: "Let me remember and understand".

We are not alone: Jesus is close to us, among us, within us! His new presence in history happens through the gift of the Holy Spirit, through whom it is possible to instil a living relationship with Him, the Crucified and Risen One. The Spirit, flowing within us through the Sacraments of

Baptism and Confirmation, acts in our life. He guides us in the way to think, to act, to distinguish between what is good and what is bad; he helps us to practice the charity of Jesus, his giving of himself to others, especially to the most needy. We are not alone! The sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit is also the peace that Jesus gives to his disciples: "My peace I give to you". It is different from what mankind hopes for or tries to achieve. The peace of Jesus flows from victory over sin, over selfishness which impedes us from loving one another as brothers and sisters. It is a gift of God and a sign of his presence. Each disciple called today to follow Jesus carrying the cross, receives within him- or herself the peace of the Crucified and Risen One in the certainty of his victory and in expectation of his definitive coming.

May the Virgin Mary help us to welcome with docility the Holy Spirit as interior Teacher and as the living Memory of Christ on the daily journey.

**REFLECTION QUESTION**

- What has struck you from this reflection by the Holy Father?

**PRAYER**

*Spend some time in prayer with one another*

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. "Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray")
3. Move to prayers of thanks and praise to God
4. Pray for each others' prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps reciting the 'Glory Be' or similar prayer.