

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.

**A REFLECTION
BY POPE FRANCIS**

The Gospel reading for this Sixth Sunday of Easter presents a passage of the discourse that Jesus addressed to the Apostles at the Last Supper. He speaks about the work of the Holy Spirit and makes a promise: "the Counselor, 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". As the moment of the Cross approaches, Jesus reassures the Apostles that they will not be alone: the Holy Spirit will always be with them, the Paraclete, who will support them in the mission to deliver the Gospel throughout the world. In the original Greek language, the term "Paraclete" means the One who positions himself alongside, to support and comfort. Jesus returns to the Father, but continues to teach and inspire his disciples through the action of the Holy Spirit.

In what does the Holy Spirit's mission, which Jesus promises as a gift, consist? He describes it himself: "he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you". Throughout his earthly life, Jesus already passed on all that he wanted to entrust to the Apostles: he fulfilled divine Revelation, namely, all that the Father wanted to impart to mankind with the incarnation of the Son. The Holy Spirit's task is to remind, that is, to enable full understanding and to induce us to concretely implement Jesus' teachings. And this is also precisely the mission of the Church, which she accomplishes through a precise way of life, characterized by a few requirements: faith in the Lord and observance of his Word; docility to the action of the Holy Spirit, who constantly renders the Risen Lord alive and present; acceptance of his peace and the witness borne to it through an attitude of openness and of encounter with the other.

To accomplish all of this the Church cannot remain static but, with the active participation of each baptized person, she is called to act as a community on a journey, enlivened and sustained by the light and power of the Holy Spirit who makes all things new. It is a matter of freeing oneself from worldly bonds represented by our views, our strategies, our objectives that often burden the journey of faith, and to place ourselves in docile listening to the Word of the Lord. Thus it is God's Spirit who guides us and guides the Church, so that her authentic, beautiful and luminous face may shine, as Christ wished.

Today the Lord invites us to open our heart to the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that he may guide us on the paths of history. Day by day, he teaches us the logic of the Gospel, the logic of welcoming love, by 'teaching us all things' and reminding us 'of all the Lord has said to us'.

May Mary, whom in this month of May we venerate and to whom we pray with special devotion as our heavenly mother, always protect the Church and the whole of humanity. May she who, with humble and courageous faith, fully cooperated with the Holy Spirit for the

incarnation of the Son of God, help us too to allow ourselves to be taught and guided by the Paraclete, so that we may welcome the Word of God and witness to it with our lives.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 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?
- 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?

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.