

## GOSPEL

JOHN 14:15-16, 23-26

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. '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.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

## A REFLECTION BY POPE FRANCIS

Today we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost, which completes the Season of Easter, 50 days after the Resurrection of Christ. The liturgy invites us to open our mind and our heart to the gift of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised on several occasions to his disciples: the first and most important gift that he obtained for us with his Resurrection. Jesus himself asked the Father for this gift, as today's Gospel Reading attests, during the Last Supper. Jesus says to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you for ever".

These words remind us first of all that love for a person, and for the Lord, is shown not with words but with deeds; and also, "observing the commandments" should be understood in the existential sense, so as to embrace the whole of life. In fact, being Christian does not mean mainly belonging to a certain culture or adhering to a certain doctrine, but rather joining one's own life, in all its aspects, to the person of Jesus and, through Him, to the Father. For this purpose Jesus promises the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to his

disciples. Owing to the Holy Spirit, to the Love that unites the Father and the Son and proceeds from them, we may all live the very life of Jesus. The Spirit, in fact, teaches us all things, that is, the single indispensable thing: to love as God loves.

In promising the Holy Spirit, Jesus defines him as "another Counselor", which means Paraclete, Advocate, Intercessor, in other words, the One who helps us, protects us, is at our side on the journey of life and in the struggle for good and that against evil. Jesus says "another Counselor" because He is the first, He himself, who became flesh precisely to take our human condition upon himself and free it from the slavery of sin.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit plays a role in teaching and remembrance. Teaching and remembrance. Jesus told us: "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" (v. 26). The Holy Spirit does not bring a different teaching, but renders alive and brings into effect the teaching of Jesus, so that the passage of time may neither erase nor diminish it. The Holy Spirit instills this teaching in our heart, helps us to internalize it, making it become a part of us, flesh of our flesh. At the same time, he prepares our heart to be truly capable of receiving the words and example of the Lord. Every time the word of Jesus is received with joy in our heart, this is the work of the Holy Spirit.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What is your image of, relationship with or attitude to the Holy Spirit?
- What things do you notice about people who you regard as having the Holy Spirit active in their life?
- What do you do to make sure the Holy Spirit finds in you and your life, a place where it is welcome and allowed to live?

## 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.