



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**The Sixth Sunday of Easter.
May 25th 2025**

Theme: "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid."

Gathering Prayer

All: Grant, almighty God, that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days of joy, which we keep in honor of the risen Lord, and that what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: John 14:23-29

²³ Jesus replied: '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. ²⁴ 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.

²⁵ I have said these things to you while still with you; ²⁶ 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.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ I have told you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe.

Gospel Focus

In the last weeks of the Easter season, we hear Jesus preparing his followers for his ascension, when he will be separated from them for some time. It is not to be a final separation-even death, after all, could not keep Jesus from them. And he prepares them for Pentecost, too, promising to send his Holy Spirit so that they will not be left alone in his apparent absence. We are still living in a post-ascension world, waiting with the disciples for Jesus' final return. We, too, live in a world where Jesus' presence is in the Spirit and sacrament and story rather than in a human body. This can be challenging; it would surely be nice to hear his literal voice and enjoy his bodily presence. Jesus reassures us, though, that he is with us, never leaving us alone as we travel through life.

Gospel Reflection

Frequently. The only time the Holy Spirit features in our parishes is at or near Pentecost and in reference to the sacrament of confirmation. The Third Person of the Trinity deserves so much more attention than that! In the readings today, the church gives us a guide to understand the crucial role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, in both its individual and communal dimensions.

At the Last Supper, Jesus promises that “we [my Father and I] will come to him [whoever loves me] to make a dwelling in him”. Even as Jesus speaks of his departure, he promises the presence of God-not in a physical presence, but in a greater way. Jesus promises that his own Spirit will come to make his dwelling with us. Indeed, this is the Spirit that “proceeds from the Father and the Son.” The love between the Father and the Son overflows such that it becomes coequal Person, the very Spirit that resides within us in our Baptism. It is in the Spirit that we come to be children of God the Father, with Christ Jesus as our brother. This is the nearness to each of us that Jesus promises in this gospel passage-a bond greater than any other is.

The Holy Spirit is present not only within each of us but in a special way within the church, shaping and guiding it. At the Last Supper, Jesus gives us his peace but makes sure to distinguish it from peace as we know it. Peace in those terms is not simple the absence of conflict, but a wholeness that only God can provide. In fact, conflict and tension can be the means through which God brings about his wholeness. The first reading gives an abbreviated account of the council of Jerusalem, in response to the first major church conflict: should Gentile converts follow Jewish customs? Luke describes that there was “no little dissension or debate” on the topic. Certainly, we today know division of all kinds within the church, whether over liturgical preference, political affiliation, and alignment with church’s teaching, or anything else getting into the way of unity. Conflict is a reality of life in community, but it is also an opportune moment for God to act. The apostles and their delegates deliberate for what must have been many hours, and they share the fruits of their discernment in a letter: “It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and from us...” The church came to a decision not through a pro-and-cons list nor by a democratic vote nor by decibel vote count in a shouting match, but in trusting their prayer and the guidance of the Holy Spirit!

Beginning in 2021, Pope Francis has invited the church to rediscover the life of the Spirit within the church *synodality*-a journey of mutual listening, guided by the Holy Spirit, within the communion of the church but looking to invite those outside of it. By this invitation, may we come to know the fruits of the Spirit in our own prayer, our families and our church, both local and universal.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

¹ Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved.” ² Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.

²² The apostles and elders, in agreement with the whole church, decided to choose representatives and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. The ones chosen were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers. ²³ This is the letter delivered by them: “The apostles and the elders, your brothers, to the brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia of Gentile origin: greetings. ²⁴ Since we have heard that some of our number who went out without any mandate from us have upset you with their teachings and disturbed your peace of mind, ²⁵ we have with one accord decided to choose representatives and to send them to you along with our beloved

Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶ who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ So we are sending Judas and Silas who not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, by word of mouth: ²⁸ 'It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities, namely, ²⁹ to abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, from blood, from meats of strangled animals, and from unlawful marriage. If you keep free of these, you will be doing what is right. Farewell.'"

Responsorial Reading — Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

R: O God, let all the nations praise you! (R)

May God have pity on us and bless us; may he let his face shine upon us. So may your way be known upon earth; among all nations, your salvation **(R)**

May the nations be glad and exult because you rule the peoples in equity; the nations on the earth you guide. **(R)**

May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you! May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him! **(R)**

Second Reading — Rev 21:10-14, 22-23

¹⁰ The angel took me in spirit to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹ It gleamed with the splendor of God. Its radiance was like that of a precious stone, like jasper, clear as crystal. ¹² It had a massive, high wall, with twelve gates where twelve angels were stationed and on which names were inscribed, the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. ¹³ There were three gates facing east, three north, three south, and three west. ¹⁴ The wall of the city had twelve courses of stones as its foundation, on which were inscribed the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

²² I saw no temple in the city for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. ²³ The city had no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gave it light, and its lamp was the Lamb.

Sharing and Discussion

1. "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Reflect and discuss, how have these words impacted your life?
2. What makes it hard for you to trust in the peace Jesus promises? What in this life leaves you troubled or afraid?
3. Jesus tells us, "Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid." How can we be at peace?

Closing Prayer

All: O God, you gave us the peace of Easter so that we might be released from sin and death, find hope in our future, and rejoice in your glory. Hear our prayers this day as we

trust in you, bringing before you our needs and the needs of all the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.