

We are at the end period of Easter Season and next Sunday is the Ascension Sunday. The Gospel Reading of today speaks of the farewell Discourse of Jesus before his ascension and his promise of the Holy Spirit. When we make a trip and be away from our children and loved ones, we give a lot of instruction and tell them about how and what they should do during our absence and we assure them that this will be a small trip and will return soon because we love them. So also Jesus speaks of His journey to the Father and tells them that he will not leave them orphaned but his Spirit will be with them till the end of time because he loved them so much. Jesus calls the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Spirit of truth who will live in the hearts of disciples to console and to guide them. The Holy Spirit will be their Counselor, Comforter, Helper, Intercessor, Strengthener. The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will always be with them to defend them, to intercede for them, and to comfort them. The First Reading speaks of how the message of Christ spread throughout the Mediterranean world, starting at Jerusalem. The power behind this growth was the Holy Spirit and the risen presence of Jesus. As the ministry grew, the Apostolic leaders needed more helpers and so they chose other men. They were courageously able to undergo the persecution because the Holy Spirit was with them. Jesus also commands his disciples to remain in his love by following his commandments. The Spirit of God will be revealed to them only when they keep the commandments in their lives. “Anyone who has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”

Keeping the commandment of love is far more challenging to us. In the gospel passage, Jesus tells us how it is possible for us. He invites us to abide in his love, to spend time with him and to let his love transform us: helping us to see, and to energize and empower us to change, to grow and to love maturely. To love Jesus in our brothers and sisters is part of the Christian calling. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate indicates to us the way we should go, the paths that need to be repaired, the relationships that needs to be built. The reward for following his commandments is that he will come in to us. The more we love him, the more we desire to do what he wants of us. Love is not measured by what we feel but what we do. We love God not just by expressing our love directly for him but by the way in which we extend our love to all those around us with no exception whatsoever. When we live our lives in this way we will in turn experience God’s love and the Holy Spirit will be with us. We may daily face uncertainty, conflict, and temptations. Let us be aware of the abiding presence of God within us. It is the abiding presence of God within us that enables us to face all these with undying hope and true Christian courage. The Spirit of the risen Lord prompts us to turn to His Holy Scriptures for support and encouragement, enables us to learn the divine truths, and grants us His peace at all times. We are not alone. Jesus assures of the Holy Spirit to be with us always to share with us his joy and replace the burden of our guilt with the freedom of forgiveness. We need only allow Jesus into our lives to be rid of this loneliness. So let us pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit to enter into our hearts and stay with us always. Amen.