

*May 21, 2017*  
*6th Sunday of Easter*  
*John 14:15-21*



(Jesus said to his disciples,) 15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, 17 the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. 21 Whoever 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."

### Background

This gospel passage follows on the text that was read last Sunday. It, too, comes from the last discourse of Jesus. This short text contains many important themes that would be worthy of reflection.

The connection between love and keeping God's commandments is presented in both the first and last verse of the text. Obedience is not love. The eldest brother of the prodigal son was obedient. When one loves, they do what pleases the one they love. The second part of verse 19 speaks of the presence of God to those who love.

Throughout the text, John presents some insights into the relationship of God as Trinity. The intimate relationship of the Father and Jesus is expressed especially in verses 16, 20, and 21. At the same time there is a sense in the text that the Father and Jesus are distinct from one another. The text also includes a reference to the Spirit in verses 16 and 17. While this suggests a relationship between the Father, Jesus, and the Spirit, it is not clearly defined. They are connected in how they are present in the world, but they are also distinct one from the other.

As was stated last week, it seems to be unclear whether Jesus is preparing the disciples for his departure in death or for his departure from earth in the Ascension. Jesus' departure will leave the disciples with a sense of loss. He reassures them that he will not leave them orphaned. They will find His presence not by looking outside of themselves, but within.

Lastly, it may be helpful to be aware that John's gospel reflects a culture where society was viewed as being separated into two groups: one's extended family, and everyone else. All those outside of the family were presumed to be a possible threat. Hence the text casts the world as distinctly different and separate from the favored loved members of the community.

### Reflection Questions

1. Where do you experience your most loving relationships? Where you experience your most loyal relationships? Are they the same?
2. Do you think of obedience more in terms of being obedient to a code of conduct, or being obedient to people, oneself, or God?
3. Do you know people who seem to live in the Spirit of truth? How does this affect your relationship with them?

4. Have you ever felt abandoned by God? How did you respond?
5. Jesus says that he is in the Father and He and the Father are in you as a disciple. How do you experience this?
6. Jesus also talks about the world as being incapable of accepting or recognizing the presence of Holy Spirit. How do you understand what Jesus is saying about the world?
7. Last Sunday, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father, and that would be enough for them. Where does this text suggest that Philip should look for the presence of the Father?
8. As you hear the text today, what do you hear God saying to you? What do you want to say to God in response?

<http://il-ritiro.org/gospel-reflections.aspx>

The reflection and questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel.

