

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15^{vi} ^{vii}

Jesus said: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning." "I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned." "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

^{vi} About the Gospel: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

In this passage from his Farewell Discourse, Jesus warns the disciples of his impending death and of persecution to come. Yet death is to him primarily a return to the Father, and thus he tells them that it is to their advantage, for only thus can he send the Spirit to them. When the "Spirit of truth" (v. 26) comes, the Spirit will lead the disciples into an ever-deeper understanding of Jesus' revelation. Through the inspiration of the Spirit, the mission of the disciples will be one with that of Jesus

^{vii} Reflection and Response

The readings for the Feast of Pentecost seem to address three issues prevalent in the Church today. The first is our mistrust of new directions. On the whole, we seem suspicious of new trends and prophetic calls. Thus, most of us can empathize when the disciples lock their doors and cower in fear. The wind that sweeps over them—this promised Advocate—makes all things new, disrupts quiet routines and shakes up the established

order.

Yet there is no record of anyone running in panic from the upper room. Through the gift of the Spirit, human antipathy to change is overcome. Fears subside. The message that emerges is not of fear or hostility, but praise for God's marvels. God works as well in the new order as in the old, the disciples learn quickly. And they stick around to find out what other discoveries await.

Another trend in both modern Church and culture is suspicion of differences. We are wary of those with different ethnicity, gender or background. If someone deviates even slightly from our notions of correctness, we start piling on our armor in self-defense. Rarely do we explore our affinities. More often we build our antipathies. And in extreme cases, we project all our deficiencies onto the person who is different. Yet a theme of today's readings is welcoming difference. The lovely chorus rises in praise: diversity enhances rather than detracts.

A third question that arises among many Christians today concerns the tension between contemplation and action. To what extent should we engage in prayer? To what extent should we be ministering in the world? Jesus first establishes within the disciples the peace that springs from seeing him and recognizing his wounds. Then he sends them into ministry. Filled with the Spirit, they are empowered to touch peoples' lives at the deepest level, where questions of sin and forgiveness originate. Having his peace, they have everything. Sure of his presence, they can go forth.