

Commentary on the Gospel: “We will come to him and make our home”

Gospel for the 6th Sunday of Easter and commentary.

Gospel (*Jn 14:23-29*)

Jesus answered him:

“If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

“These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, 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. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard me say to you, ‘I go away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place, you may believe.”

Commentary

In the intimacy of the Last Supper, Jesus offers his disciples some

teachings that seem almost a farewell and last testament.

Jesus first makes reference here to the deep mystery of God's presence in the soul. In the Old Testament, the Lord progressively made himself known to the people of Israel and promised to remain in their midst. This presence was especially signified in the *Holy of Holies*, the most sacred place in the temple of Jerusalem. Now Jesus announces a new form of presence in each person, so long as we love and keep his word, becoming a temple in which God abides, as Saint Paul reminded the first Christians: "For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor 6:15-16).

This presence of God in the soul has always fascinated the saints, who

have felt urged to correspond to such great love on God's part for his creatures. As Saint Josemaria said: "The Blessed Trinity has fallen in love with man, raised to the level of grace and made 'to God's image and likeness.' God has redeemed him from sin ... and desires ardently to dwell in his soul."[1]

Are we habitually aware of this deep truth of God's presence in our soul in grace? Do we strive to respond each day with gratitude, with gestures of affection and adoration? Saint Augustine advised: "God is not really distant. You are the one who makes Him distant. Love Him and He will draw near to you; love Him and He will abide in you. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything."[2]

God's presence in the soul cannot be separated from the powerful action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus makes reference to him here and

calls him the *Paraclete*. This Greek term literally means someone who walks alongside, while he speaks, suggests, and advises. Thus it can be translated as “advocate” and “consoler.” “Advocate” because he intercedes before Divine Justice to obtain forgiveness for our sins thanks to Jesus’ Passion; and also as “consoler” because he alleviates our afflictions with his suggestions.

Regarding this passage, the Fathers of the Church tell us that it is Jesus’ physical absence that makes possible this effective action of his Spirit in our hearts. There the Paraclet will “remind” us of Jesus’ words, as He himself announces to his disciples, and urge us to love them and follow them: “the Spirit of truth invisibly inspires the knowledge of the divine in our understanding.”[3]

When we truly strive to follow docilely the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, our soul is filled with peace

and joy, sure signs of God's presence, even in the midst of difficulties.

Hence Jesus also makes reference to the first fruit that he would obtain through his Passion and that he offers them when he rises: peace. Not the peace the world offers, the easy life, but the peace of Christ, fruit of the Cross and personal struggle. As Saint Josemaria said: "How many obstacles vanish when in our hearts we place ourselves next to this God of ours, who never abandons us! Jesus' love for his own, for the sick and for the lame, is renewed, expressed in different ways. 'What is the matter?' he asks, and we reply, 'It's my...' At once there is light or at least the acceptance of his will, and inner peace."[4]

May each of us always have recourse to God present in our soul, as a font of living water where we can quench our deepest thirst, and where we can

recover once and again the joy and peace we need to bring everywhere.

[1] Saint Josemaria, *Christ is Passing By*, no. 84.

[2] Saint Augustine, *Sermon 21*.

[3] Didimus, *De Spiritu Sancto*, in *Catena aurea*.

[4] Saint Josemaria, *Friends of God*, no. 249.

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