

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • Psalter Week 2

A FAREWELL GIFT

(JOHN 14:23-29)



As Eastertide draws near to its close, our Gospel reading today introduces the theme of Jesus' departure, his return to the Father.

But the disciples will receive two gifts, distinct but related. First, the Paraclete will come from the Father and will continue Jesus' mission of teaching the disciples, leading them into an ever-deepening appreciation of his message as they remember all that Jesus has said to them. The Paraclete will maintain Jesus' presence among the disciples. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will be the second Paraclete, just as Jesus was the first, so that might help us to understand the role of the Spirit once Jesus is no longer physically present.

The second gift is that of peace, but it is Jesus' peace, something that the world cannot match. It is connected with the gift of the Spirit, the Paraclete, and is from God. It is not the absence of strife in human relations, but rooted in the Spirit of truth, and Jesus goes on to talk about how the disciples should not be distressed at his leaving them, as he is going back to the Father, an idea which we find only in the fourth Gospel. Jesus' departure may be marked by violence and malice on the part of his opponents, but he accepts this as his way of returning the Father's love for him. This should not be a cause of fear for the disciples, but rather one of joy. ■

REFLECT

The Easter event is not simply about the Resurrection of Jesus: the final act of the Paschal mystery is the conferring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. In our Gospel reading today, we are invited to look forward to the consequence of Jesus' going back to the Father, which will be the giving of the Holy Spirit who will continue Jesus' presence among us and within us.

But we will not benefit from this gift unless we are open to the Holy Spirit and prepared to allow the Paraclete to influence our thoughts and actions. The peace – *shalom* – which Jesus promises flows from Jesus' union with the Father and our union with Jesus. The gift of peace was associated in the Hebrew scriptures with the Messiah.

Jesus is not promising a trouble-free existence for his followers (then or now) but rather a rooted way of being which can cope with the troubles which arise in human life. "Peace" in the Hebrew sense is more a matter of total well-being, of having a firm anchor of faith within ourselves which helps us face the problems which we encounter. This is one of the reasons for the giving of the Holy Spirit, the other Paraclete. But the Spirit can only function in our lives if we are open to the Spirit. Soon we will celebrate the feast of the Ascension of Jesus; we might ask ourselves in the next few days how we appreciate the ongoing presence of Jesus with us and what that means. ■

LEARN

The Easter mystery includes the events surrounding the Resurrection of Jesus, the Ascension and Pentecost.

The giving of the Spirit is the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to his disciples.

The word "Advocate" in today's reading is an alternative to the term Paraclete.

SAY

Abba, Father, send your Spirit, Glory, Jesus Christ

(Ginny Vissing)

DO

Try invoking the Holy Spirit the next time you are faced with a difficult situation and see what happens.



ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;
proclaim to the ends of the earth:
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion
these days of joy,
which we keep in honour 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,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 15:1-2. 22-29

A reading from the Acts of Apostles.

Some men came down from Judaea and taught the brothers, "Unless you have yourselves circumcised in the tradition of Moses you cannot be saved." This led to disagreement, and after Paul and Barnabas had had a long argument with these men it was arranged that Paul and Barnabas and others of the church should go up to Jerusalem and discuss the problem with the apostles and elders.

Then the apostles and elders decided to choose delegates to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; the whole church concurred with this. They chose Judas known as Barsabbas and Silas, both leading men in the brotherhood, and gave them this letter to take with them:

"The apostles and elders, your brothers, send greetings to the brothers of pagan birth in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. We hear that some of our members have disturbed you with their demands and have unsettled your minds. They acted without any authority from us, and so we have decided unanimously to elect delegates and to send them to you with Barnabas and Paul, men we highly respect who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accordingly we are sending you Judas and Silas, who will confirm by word of mouth what we have written in this letter. It has been decided by

the Holy Spirit and by ourselves not to saddle you with any burden beyond these essentials: you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from fornication. Avoid these, and you will do what is right. Farewell."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 66

Response:

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

or

Alleluia!

- O God, be gracious and bless us and let your face shed its light upon us. So will your ways be known upon earth and all nations learn your saving help. (R.)
- Let the nations be glad and exult for your rule the world with justice. With fairness your rule the peoples, you guide the nations on earth. (R.)
- Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. May God still give us his blessing till the ends of the earth revere him. (R.)

SECOND READINGApocalypse
21:10-14. 22-23

A reading from the book of the Apocalypse.

In the spirit, the angel took me to the top of an enormous high mountain and showed me Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down from God out of heaven. It had all the radiant glory of God and glittered like some precious jewel of crystal-clear diamond. The walls of it were of a great height, and had twelve gates; at each of the twelve gates there was an angel, and over the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; on the east there were three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. The city walls stood on twelve foundation stones, each one of which bore the name of one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

I saw that there was no temple in the city since the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb were themselves the temple, and the city did not need the sun or the moon for light, since it was lit by the radiant glory of God and the Lamb was a lighted torch for it.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! alleluia!

Jesus said: "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word,
and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him."

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 14:23-29

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"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.

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.
I have said these things to you while still with you;
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. 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. 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.
I have told you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May our prayers rise up to you, O Lord,
together with the sacrificial offerings,
so that, purified by your graciousness,
we may be conformed to the mysteries of
your mighty love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

If you love me, keep my commandments,
says the Lord,
and I will ask the Father and he will send
you another Paraclete,
to abide with you for ever, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty ever-living God,
who restore us to eternal life in the
Resurrection of Christ,
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this
paschal Sacrament
and pour into our hearts the strength of this
saving food.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.