

Sixth Sunday of Easter – year A

John 14:15-21

Much ado about the Holy Spirit, huh?

Apparently an important actor in our lives ...

1st reading from Acts:

“Peter and John went and prayed for them that they might receive *the Holy Spirit*.

They laid hands on them and they received *the Holy Spirit*.”

2nd reading from 1 Peter:

“He was brought to life in *the Spirit*” *and*

this Gospel passage from John 14: the beginning of the Last Supper discourses.

Jesus shares with the Apostles, gathered around the table, about *another* Advocate.

Jesus is the *first* Advocate.

The Holy Spirit is

- the *second* Advocate
- the *other Paraclete*, i.e. the other “One who accompanies, guides, and consoles”

[These discourses are extremely rich, and seemingly convoluted,

i.e. the order with which Jesus proceeds is difficult to understand!]

V 15: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

If Jesus is God, then our love relationship with Him implies obedience.

Why? Because He *knows all things*, and we do not!

And we must therefore let ourselves be *led*.

To obey is to let oneself *be led*.

It is quite simply that (it is not quite simply *achieved* !, but it is quite simply that).

V 16: Jesus then oddly seems to make such obedience

a condition for his asking the Holy Spirit for us.

Wrong – *fortunately*!

Jesus does not give a condition but makes a promise.

How can we know that?

Jesus’ reference to the Holy Spirit

is followed by *more* considerations about keeping his commandments.

Why is *that* important?

Because the commandments of which Jesus speaks

is the essentially *new* one that He gives.

It is very important to understand:

Jesus does not simply come to re-iterate the Ten Commandments.
Dying for that probably would have been a waste of time!
Jesus inaugurates a *New Covenant* in Himself.

The Ten Commandments are the *Old Covenant*.
What is this New Commandment which characterizes the New Covenant?
“Love one another as I love you.”

And?!?

Recall how, in previous dialogue regarding the Old Covenant,
Jesus summarizes the Ten Commandments;

“You shall love the Lord your God with....
and your neighbor as yourself.”

Here later states that the will of the Father is to
“Believe in the one whom He has sent
and love one another as he loves us.”

There is a *big* difference: “as yourself” vs. “as He loves”.

Wait a minute: only Jesus can love as Jesus loves.

Indeed, unless *Jesus* intervenes in our hearts.

He does. He gives us the Holy Spirit, the “Promise of the Father”.

The New Commandment is impossible to keep without the Holy Spirit.

In other words, without God

- intervening
- refashioning our hearts
- flooding our hearts with love from above

we can only go as far as loving our neighbor “as our self” *on a good day* (!).

None of us is capable of laying down his/her life for an enemy.

We have been filled with the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth.

He is invisible.

He cannot be seen –

all the more by a world that tends to believe that “what you see is what you get.”

His presence is not necessarily felt within us.

But we *know* Him, i.e. we have a deep certitude, in faith, about His presence,

thanks to His presence.

We have been lovingly taken hold of by God.

And this Presence, this Love moves us.

In other words, the Holy Spirit moves and enables us to love our neighbor as Jesus does.

In fact, to be “real” as regards this Presence is to love in turn.

We, of course, remain absolutely free.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in no way diminishes our freedom.

We must *choose* to love with the help of the Holy Spirit.

We must choose *every day*.

Choosing is necessary, and choosing is within reach: how wonderful!

This love of neighbor (spouse, co-worker, stranger on the sidewalk, enraged commuter in the next lane, the odd person next to me in the pew, long lost aunt, whomever)

is possible.

And this love of “neighbor” with a love from above (as **V. 21** suggests):

- intensifies our bond with Christ (because the same love that binds us to Him)

and

- manifests our love for Jesus *which, in turn*
- opens us to the love of the Father and further revelation of the Son

Love leads to greater love.

Let us love.