

6th Sunday of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29 | 2nd Reading: Rev 21:10-14, 22-23 | Gospel: Jn 14:23-29

In the reading from John's Gospel today, Jesus eases into the message he has for his disciples – a message he knows they don't want to hear: He has to leave them. But Jesus tells his disciples that if they love him and keep his commandments, he and the Father will "make their dwelling" within them. He then assures them that they will not be alone: The Advocate will come to not only remind them of all he taught them, but also teach them everything they need to know in the future. Finally, he offers them peace, the peace that comes only through the Spirit and draws them closer to God. Though Jesus knows they are broken-hearted that he is leaving, he tells them to rejoice if they love him, for he is returning to his Father. Jesus' words to the first disciples ring true for every disciple throughout the ages. He does not leave anyone who loves him alone. He sends his Spirit to dwell in us, to teach and remind us of his love and how to love one another. The Spirit guides us, encourages us, and sustains us – always. We are never alone.

The first Christians, guided by the Holy Spirit, shared this message with the Gentile communities to whom they were ministering: "It is the decision of the Holy Spirit and of us not to place on you any burden beyond these necessities." This is a profound moment in the Church as it shows first, the power of the Holy Spirit working in and with the Apostles; and second, the importance of faith (not ritual circumcision, or other human laws) for salvation. The Gospel is intended for all, without exception, and the Holy Spirit is our help and our Advocate in our own lives of faith, and in our sharing of that faith with others. Let us seek the counsel of the Holy Spirit in all we do, that we might be a blessing, not a burden, for everyone seeking the glory of God's light.

STUDY: The Acts of the Apostles is an amazing account of how Jesus' followers grew from a small group of frightened people into the courageous and zealous missionaries who founded his Church. Read the catechism from 687-747 to learn more about the Holy Spirit and pray for the grace to let him work in and through you for the salvation of all who seek him.