

## **Sunday Homily on John 14:15-21 . May 21, 2017**

From Easter to Pentecost our readings focus on the early apostolic preaching of the Good News of salvation and on the promises of Jesus to his disciples, especially his promise of the Holy Spirit. Today's readings explain Who the Holy Spirit is, what His roles are and how we can experience Him in our daily lives.

**The first reading** describes how the Holy Spirit helped the Deacon Philip to preach powerfully and convert the Samaritans in large numbers. It also explains how the baptized Samaritans received a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands by the apostles Peter and John. **In the second reading**, Peter shows us the God-fearing lives, which the Holy Spirit makes it possible for believers, including ourselves, to live in the midst of opposition and persecution. **Today's Gospel**, taken from Jesus' "Last Supper Discourse," describes the gift he will send, the Holy Spirit, Who will live as **the Paraclete, the Divine Advocate**, in those who obey Jesus' commandments, especially the commandment of love. Thus, Jesus will continue to live in his believers with the Father and the Holy Spirit and they will not be left as orphans.

The risen Jesus' continued presence in us and in the Church through the Holy Spirit gives meaning and purpose to all we are and all we do in his Name. As the Divine Advocate, the Holy Spirit will instruct us in Jesus' doctrines and illumine our minds to receive deeper knowledge of our Faith. In addition, **the Divine Advocate will empower us to defend our Faith powerfully and guide us properly in the practice of true Christian love**. Thus, we will be able to recognize Jesus in the in the poor, in the sick, in the homeless, in the marginalized, in the outcast, in the drug addicts and even in the criminals ("*I was in prison...*"), thus becoming agents of healing and reconciliation in a broken and divided world.

1) We need to be open to the Holy Spirit, our Paraclete. The purpose of the indwelling Holy Spirit is to help us grow towards maturity and wholeness. We all have faults that prevent our growth: blocks of sin and imperfection, blocks due to childhood conflicts, blocks due to deeply ingrained personality traits and habits, blocks caused by addictions, and blocks resulting from bad choices we have made. We all have these blocks within us and they keep us from becoming what God wants us to be. They prevent us from growing into maturity and wholeness. God, the Holy Spirit, helps us see the truth about ourselves, to discern the blocks that inhibit our growth and to allow Him to transform us. Like the good counselor He is, the Spirit enables us to become stronger. The Holy Spirit also comes to our aid and gives us the strength to make difficult and painful decisions. God's Spirit actually lives in us, and we hear the voice of the Spirit, counseling and guiding us in the way of truth. Let us open the ears of our minds to hear Him and to obey His promptings.

2) A multimillion-dollar airplane, running out of fuel: In 1991 an Air Canada flight ran into big trouble. Passengers were enjoying an in-flight movie on the Boeing 767 when the jumbo jet's massive engines abruptly stopped. At first only those without earphones noticed anything. However, soon it was apparent the jet was in trouble. The pilot came on the speaker system and announced that Flight 143 would be making an emergency landing in a nearby aerodrome. The 69 people on board were trapped in an agonizingly slow but inescapable descent to earth. For several minutes a desperate silence hung over the cabin. Then fear gave way to screams of anxiety as the landing neared. All the latest technology could not keep the jumbo jet in the air. What had happened was this. The electronic digital fuel gauge was out of order. So the flight crew had depended on the figures given them by the refueling crew before takeoff. But someone on the refueling crew had confused pounds with kilograms. Therefore, eight hundred miles short of its destination, that mighty jet simply ran out of fuel and was forced to make an emergency landing.

Fortunately, no one was injured. A multimillion-dollar airplane, headed in the right direction, but running out of fuel – that's what's happening to a lot of people today. They have everything in life going for them -- a new car, a wonderful home, a good education, and a good job -- and one day they wake up out of fuel. At the center of their lives there is emptiness. They don't know why they are living. There is nothing outside of themselves to live for. Don't let that happen to you. Jesus tells us that the power for successful living comes from God. It is the promised gift that Jesus offers us. "Peace be with you," he says. "My peace I give to you, not as the world gives you. Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me."