

The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Principal Service readings

Acts 16.9-15 ¹ <i>or Ezekiel 37.1-14</i>	Paul has a vision and baptizes disciples The valley of the dry bones
Psalms 67	Harvest praise
Revelation 21.10,22—22.5 <i>or Acts 16.9-15</i>	John's vision of the heavenly Jerusalem Paul has a vision and baptizes disciples
John 14.23-29 <i>or John 5.1-9</i>	Jesus promises the Holy Spirit and gives his peace Jesus heals the man at the pool side

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit and gives his peace

Jesus said to his disciples: ²³Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, "I am going away, and I am coming to you." If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.'

John 14.23-29 NRSV²

¹ The reading from Acts must be used as either the first or second reading.

Comments and Questions

Jesus has already told his disciples: 'If you love me you will keep my commandments. And I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete to be with you for ever' (John 14.15-16). The Greek word *parakletos* is variously translated, as Paraclete, Advocate, Counsellor ... The context is that Jesus had been talking about his departure. He is going away but will not leave his disciples with a sense of loss, for they will receive help for their future. 'Another Paraclete' will be like Jesus for them, an advocate, a comforter, a guide, and inspiration, who will remain with them for ever.

There is a priority given to loving Jesus – the one who loves Jesus will keep the word of Jesus (14.23). Every verb given in this verse is in the future. There is a promise of an abiding place ('our home'). Through love and loyalty a bridge is built to a future Spirit-filled relationship. Conversely, those who do not love Jesus will not be able to obtain this blessing.

Although Jesus will be departing, what he has said will not be forgotten but will be recalled by the Paraclete, who will continue to instruct the disciples (14.26).

Jesus bequeaths his peace to his disciples. It is a kind of peace that cannot be matched by anything the world can provide (14.27).

Jesus' return to the Father, disturbing as it may seem, should not trouble the disciples or make them fearful. He is telling them these things now in order to build up their faith for when it does happen (14.29) – to strengthen their belief.

Quotations

1

The true spirit of prayer is no other than God's own Spirit dwelling in the hearts of the saints. And as this spirit comes from God, so doth it naturally tend to God in holy breathings and pantings. It naturally leads to God, to converse with him by prayer.

Jonathan Edwards, 1703–1758

² *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

2

No matter how much individuals do through their own efforts, they cannot actively purify themselves enough to be disposed in the least degree for the divine union of the perfection of love. God must take over and purge them in that fire that is dark for them, as we will explain.

Saint John of the Cross, 1542–1591

Related topics

For further study:

Passion / death / resurrection / sending of the Holy Spirit – pschal mystery; mystery of the church; Trinity; sacraments: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, anointing the sick; symbols: cross, light, white garment, oil, water, laying on of hands, bread, wine, assembly

Closing Prayer

Great and loving Father,
your will for us in Jesus
is the peace the world cannot give;
your abiding gift
is the Advocate he promised.

Calm all troubled hearts,
dispel every fear.
Keep us steadfast in love
and faithful to your word,
that we may always be your dwelling place.

Grant this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Opening prayers · Easter 6C³

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³ *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.*