

6th Sunday Easter / John 14:23-29

Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper, in John's Gospel, chapter 14 that we read from today, that **he was leaving them to prepare a place for them**, but he would not leave them alone as orphans. When Andrew and the unknown disciple asked him at their first meeting "Where do you live?" in the First Chapter of John, he had not given them a direct answer. He had said, "**Come and see**," and they had spent with him not only that day, but also the period of his whole ministry.

Now he could reveal to them his real dwelling place. It was first of all **with the Father**, who together **made their home within all** who loved Jesus and kept his word. So, we learn that the love of the disciple is not just for the fellow-disciple but also for the **person of Jesus**. This love is expressed by a willing listening to the entire revelation of God which Jesus has brought with him from heaven. The problem of the enemies of Jesus in the gospel was that they refused to listen to him; and so, could not provide a place for the divine indwelling.

Another way in which Jesus would continue his presence with the disciple would be **through the Holy Spirit**, usually called the "Paraclete" in the Last Supper discourse. Here the Paraclete's role as teacher is emphasized. Only after the physical departure of Jesus would the disciples understand the teaching of Jesus fully. One way they would do this would be by **remembering**. They would then grasp the significance of what he had said and done during his life. Accompanying the gift of the Holy Spirit were other gifts of salvation such as the **Peace**, which he gave them formally on Easter morning.

The Father and Jesus would make their home **within all** who loved Jesus and kept his word. This love for Jesus is expressed by a **willing listening** to the entire revelation of God. Through the Holy Spirit we would **remember** what Jesus said and did during his life and be given the gift of **Peace**. It is through the readings at liturgy that we remember what Christ has taught us and which has been passed on to us through the centuries. This remembering, or the more technical term, **anamnesis**, is repeated throughout the Eucharist, especially at the consecration of the bread and wine, "Do this in memory of me."

It is this anamnesis or remembering that brings Christ into our midst at the liturgy, whether through gathering in his name, reading the Word of God, or bringing Jesus into our midst through his Body and Blood. Notice the pattern, it is mainly a remembering of the *good things* that Christ left us: his Word, his Last Supper, his Prayer to the Father that he taught us, his Peace that the world cannot give, and Himself. It doesn't get any better and almost like heaven, or at least like the time he was on earth.

Unfortunately, we are not in heaven and we sometimes get bored at the Eucharist simply because we are humans. That is why I mention the above so that we continue to remember why we are here. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are not yet in heaven, but close. "The Father and I will dwell within you!"

Wow! Can you feel it, Jesus and God dwelling within? Well, not exactly, but there are times when we do get a touch of heaven when the liturgy is done well, especially the music. For me, there are times when at mostly weddings, funerals, and special celebrations that I feel the closeness of God. They are celebrations of life. And just as at Family Reunions, we share our memories with each other, especially those who are not with us or have died. At the Eucharist we believe that Christ really is with us, even though we do not feel it most of the time. His presence is not celebrated as a memorial but as a real presence: in the people gathered, in the Word, and in the Sacrament!

And these family celebrations do bring us together, especially when we greet each other after not having seen each other for long periods of time, when we share a meal, say our good-byes, and part with our own kiss of peace. It is not coincidence that Christ chose just such ***human-kind*** of being together for his own intimate presence among us for the Eucharistic Liturgy.

At the end of today's gospel, Jesus reminds us that he will come back for us and prepare a place for us in the next life. That is something we cannot do for each other in this life. We can't even promise to see each other in the next life unless it is through Jesus Christ. That is why such songs that do remind us of Christ's return are so important for us that only singing them make them powerful.

(Gather # 681, "We Remember")

We remember how you loved us
to your death,
and still we celebrate,
for you are with us here;
and we believe that we will see you
when you come
in your glory Lord.

We remember,
We celebrate,
We believe!