

6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter year a

I feel a little sad, because the wonderful time of Eastertide is coming to an end.

Next week it's the ascension of Jesus into Heaven and then Pentecost Sunday when we will celebrate the Holy Spirit in a special way as we confirm our young people.

Over these weeks of Eastertide, through our reading of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of Peter, we have enjoyed the story of the beginnings of our church, as the Apostles started branching out into pagan territories.

We have also experienced the wonderful way that John exposes the beauty of what Jesus has had to say and do.

John relates Jesus words as he approached his last days on earth especially what he had to say at the last supper.

The text in the gospel from John today covers Jesus discourse with his Disciples following the Last Supper, just prior to His agony in the garden, his arrest crucifixion and resurrection. He is preparing them for life without him.

Jesus promise to his disciples of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit is part of this long farewell discourse.

This long discourse is a unique summary of the mystery of the incarnation and the role of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus.

This is probably a good time to ask, how we view the Holy Spirit, when we bless ourselves it's in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is, perhaps the hardest one of the Trinity to comprehend.

In the Gospel today Jesus gives us a vivid example of who the Holy Spirit is.

He says The Father will give us another advocate to be with us forever, a Spirit of Truth.

Jesus then goes on to say, He is with us, he is in us.

Writing about today's gospel. T.S.Eliot wrote; "The communion that we hear proclaimed in today's gospel is the deepest, most intense and personal of unions, prefaced repeatedly by the word *in* it is the indwelling of the Paraclete who is in us. Jesus also says *you in me and I in*

*you*. This indwelling happens through mutual love framed in the first and last verses of the gospel”

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The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God who has been living in us since the moment of conception, identified especially at our baptism, and later at the time of confirmation.

The Holy Spirit brings much to us, as Jesus says he is our Advocate.

An advocate who speaks up for us in every aspect of our lives, who testifies on our behalf.

He has a special role as our defender. He comforts and strengthens us enabling us to cope with life in the true Christian spirit. He brings many gifts and fruits into our lives, the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge reverence and awe.

His fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness faithfulness, and self control.

Everything we need to live our lives as faithful followers of Jesus

To Jesus real love is somewhat different to our understanding. It must be expressed not so much as a sentiment or emotion but as real obedience to God.

So, to practice real love, we as weak human beings need the daily assistance of a Divine Helper, this comes in the Person of the Holy Spirit to help us.

The Spirit reveals to us what God is really like by empowering us to practice mutual love enabling us to recognize Jesus in the needy, the poor, in the sick and marginalized.

We all have blocks in our lives that restrict our growth in faith, blocks of, sin, habits, personality traits, bad choices we have made, and so on.

The point is that, with the Holy Spirit active in our lives we can allow Him to transform our lives.

Let us open our minds to hear Him and obey His promptings.

And when confused or in doubt we pray Holy Spirit be my helper and my guide, and He will.

Let us dwell for a moment on the number of times John mentions the word “love’ today, in fact throughout his entire gospel john talks frequently about love.

Not a tacky love but the love God has for us and our love returned to Him. And the love we share with others

My friends the greatest gift we have received from God is the ability to receive and give love.