

Sunday Message

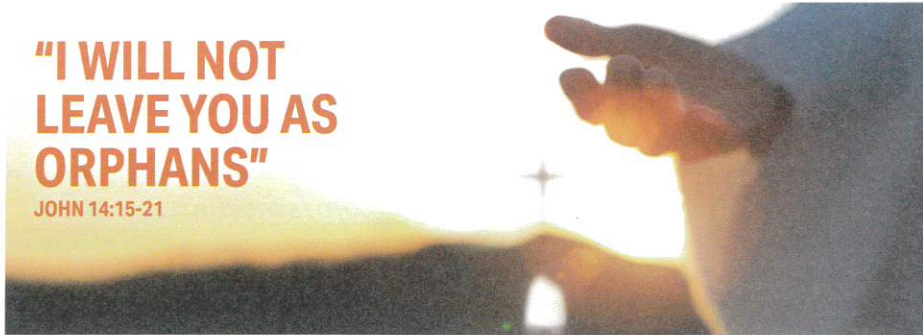
6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year A • 10 May 2026 • Psalter Week 2

**"I WILL NOT
LEAVE YOU AS
ORPHANS"**

JOHN 14:15-21



Today's Gospel is taken from Jesus' farewell to his disciples. As a farewell between friends who have spent years in each other's company, it has an especially intimate tone. It touches on four themes that were common in ancient farewell discourses.

The one who is departing usually asks those who will be left behind to guard their legacy. Jesus' legacy to his disciples is the teaching he has left them, his commandments, and so today's Gospel begins with a plea to keep the commandments.

The second theme is how those left behind will keep that legacy. We sometimes say that a group of people, such as the members of a religious order, have kept their founder's spirit alive. In the case of Jesus, this is even more true. The spirit he leaves them is not just good memories that will inspire them. The Spirit of Jesus will remain with them as a new form of presence. John calls this form of Jesus' presence the Paraclete. This is an unusual word we find only in the writings of John. It is not easy to find an exact English equivalent for it, so it is sometimes translated as 'advocate' or 'comforter'. The Greek word means literally someone you call to your aid. It could be used as a legal term for the lawyer of the accused ('advocate' in that sense) or for a friend who was prepared to give evidence on his behalf, a sort of character witness. It could also be used for someone who brought consolation or comfort to those who were downhearted. John probably intends all these meanings at once.

The Spirit that Jesus gives his followers will never desert them. We should keep in mind that the first readers of the Gospel lived in a hostile world where their faith might be put to the ultimate test by arrest, imprisonment and martyrdom. For many of them, the ordeal of appearing in a public court to give a defence of their faith must have been a nerve-wracking possibility. What were they going to say, especially if they were not used to speaking publicly? Jesus assures them they will not be left alone: the Spirit of Truth will be their constant companion. Like the word of Jesus, the Paraclete will abide with them.

The third theme is Jesus' assurance to his own that he will not leave them orphans. Even though the world believes he has died, his risen presence will remain with them, more mysterious indeed, but no less real by not being visible to the eye. The eye of faith will be able to discern the presence of the risen one and will know that his departure to the Father is only a temporary arrangement.

The fourth theme is that the revelation of Jesus has not ceased because he is no longer there. The future will bring new challenges but if they continue to remain united with Jesus and through him to the Father, he will continue to reveal himself to them in many new ways. ■

LEARN

The Christian is one who does God's will.

Love is at the heart of the Christian life.

God will never abandon us.

DO

The Holy Spirit is the holy breath of God. As you breathe in and out, try to imagine your breath as the Holy Spirit, the breath of God, filling you with life every minute of the day.

REFLECT

Towards the end of her life, my mother would often state that she always knew she was loved, that she had been surrounded by love throughout her 90 years. She appreciated just how fortunate she was.

To experience that kind of love is a very great blessing. Thank God, most of us have experienced the love of people close to us; we know what it is like to give and receive love.

But there are many whose experience is very different – people who have been abandoned, neglected, or taken for granted, people who have experienced the cold hand of rejection rather than the warm embrace of love and affection.

After the collapse of the Ceaușescu regime in Romania in 1989, aid workers discovered orphanages in which thousands of children and teenagers were kept in appalling conditions. They were malnourished, dressed in rags and locked in cages or rooms for hours on end. Many found it difficult to communicate and were suffering from what psychologists call 'skin hunger'. They lacked warm human touch. They didn't know what it was like to be kissed, embraced or held close. They didn't know what it was like to be loved. These orphans lacked the essential requirements to develop into healthy, loving, lovable human beings. They had been treated horribly.

There's nothing worse than the feeling of being abandoned, forgotten and alone.

In today's Gospel, Jesus promises that we will never be abandoned, forgotten and alone. "I will not leave you as orphans," he declares. "I will come back to you."

He will send the Holy Spirit to be our help and guide. It's a statement of the profound love he and his Father have for all of us. We are loved so much they will never abandon us. No matter what difficulties we face, we can be certain we are not orphans. We are children of a loving God. ■

PRAY

Pray for those who feel lost, abandoned or unloved, that they may know that God is with them.

SAY

**"Lord, I know you are with me.
Help me to be aware of your presence at all times. Amen."**

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;
proclaim to the ends of the earth:
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.*

COLLECT

Grant, almighty God,
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion these days
of joy,
which we keep in honour of the risen Lord,
and that what we relive in remembrance
we may always hold to in what we do.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
In those days: Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

Now when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 66(65):1-3a, 4-5, 6-7a, 16, 20. R. 1

R: *Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.*

Or *Alleluia.*

1. Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise.
Say to God, 'How wondrous your deeds!' **R.**
2. 'Before you all the earth shall bow down,
shall sing to you, sing to your name!
Come and see the works of God:
his wondrous deeds among the children of Adam. **R.**
3. He turned the sea into dry land;
they passed through the river on foot.
Let our joy, then, be in him;
he rules for ever by his might. **R.**
4. Come and hear, all who fear God;
I will tell what he did for my soul.
Blest be God, who did not reject my prayer,
nor withhold from me his merciful love. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

Beloved: In your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL John 14:23

R: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord,
and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.

R: *Alleluia.*

GOSPEL John 14:15-21

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May our prayers rise up to you, O Lord,
together with the sacrificial offerings,
so that, purified by your graciousness,
we may be conformed to the mysteries of your mighty love.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord,
and I will ask the Father and he will send you
another Paraclete,
to abide with you for ever, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty ever-living God,
who restore us to eternal life in the Resurrection of Christ,
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament
and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.