

SIXTH Sunday of Easter - Year A

[Acts 6:1-7; 1 Peter 2:4-9; Jn. 14:1-12]

Excerpts of Pope Francis - Angelus- 14 MAY 2023

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Brothers and sisters, the Gospel for today, the Sixth Sunday of Easter, speaks to us about the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus calls the *Paraclete* (cf. *Jn 14:15-17*). *Paraclete* is a word that comes from Greek, which means both *comforter* and *advocate* at the same time. This means that the Holy Spirit never leaves us alone, he is near to us, like a lawyer who assists the accused person, standing by his or her side. And he suggests to us how to defend ourselves from those who accuse us. Let us recall that the great accuser is always the devil, who puts sin inside of you, the desire to sin, wickedness. Let us reflect on these two aspects: his closeness to us, and his assistance against those who accuse us.

His *closeness* : The Holy Spirit, Jesus says, “dwells with you and will be in you” (cf. v. 17). He never abandons us. The Holy Spirit wants to stay with us; he is not a passing guest who comes to pay us a courtesy visit. He is a companion for life, a stable presence. He is Spirit and desires to dwell in our spirits. He is patient and stays with us even when we fall. He remains because he truly loves us; he does not pretend to love us, and then leaves us alone when things get difficult. No. He is loyal, he is transparent, he is authentic.

Indeed, if we find ourselves in a moment of trial, the Holy Spirit comforts us, bringing us God’s pardon and strength. And when he places our errors before us and corrects us, he does so gently — there is always the timbre of tenderness and the warmth of love in his voice that speaks to the heart. Certainly, the Paraclete Spirit is demanding, because he is a true, faithful friend, who does not hide anything, who suggests what we should change and how to grow. But when he corrects us, he never humiliates us, and never instils distrust. On the contrary, he conveys the certainty that with God, we can always make it. This is his closeness. It is a beautiful certainty.

The Paraclete Spirit is the second aspect. He is our *advocate* and he defends us. He defends us from those who accuse us: from ourselves when we do not love and forgive ourselves, when we go so far as perhaps telling ourselves that we are failures and good for nothing; from the world who discards those who do not fit into its patterns and models; from the devil who is the “accuser” *par excellence* and the divider (cf. *Rev 12:10*), and does everything to make us feel incapable and unhappy.

In the face of all these accusing thoughts, the Holy Spirit suggests to us how to respond. How? The Paraclete, Jesus says, is the One who “reminds us of everything Jesus told us” (cf. *Jn 14:26*). He *reminds* us, therefore, of the words of the Gospel, and thus enables us to respond to the accusing devil, not with our own words, but with the Lord’s own words. He reminds us, above all, that Jesus always spoke of the Father

who is in heaven, he made the Father known to us, and revealed the Father's love for us, who are his children. If we call on the Spirit, we will learn to embrace and recall the most important reality of life that protects us from the accusations of evil. And what is the most important reality in life? That we are beloved children of God. We are God's beloved children: this is the most important reality, and the Spirit reminds us of this.

Brothers and sisters, let us ask ourselves today: Do we call on the Holy Spirit? Do we pray to him often? Let us not forget about the one who is close to us, or rather, is within us! Then: Do we listen to his voice, both when he encourages us and when he corrects us? Do we respond with Jesus' words to the accusations from the evil one, to the "tribunals" of life? Do we remember that we are beloved children of God? May Mary make us docile to the voice of the Holy Spirit and sensitive to his presence.