

PENTECOST – 9th June 2019

**THE HOLY SPIRIT....HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS – Biblical Commentary by
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John 14,15-16.23-26

“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 forever,

“If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

“These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you

The feast of Pentecost marks the passage from the old alliance. In fact, on the day when the Jewish community celebrated the gift of the law on Mount Sinai to Moses, on that day the action of the Spirit burst onto the community of believers in Jesus. A new relationship with God begins. With Jesus, and with the action of this Spirit, the believer is no longer the one who obeys God by observing his laws, those given by Moses, but the one who resembles the Father by practicing a love similar to his. Here is the gift of the Spirit.

On this day of Pentecost the liturgy presents to us with John's Gospel, chapter 14, from verse 15 and there are other verses that are then more or less adjusted to give a unitary text.

After making the disciples capable of loving at the last supper by washing their feet, Jesus asks for their love. The evangelist writes: *“If you love me...”* it is the first time in which Jesus asks for love, but he does it only after having made his disciples capable of loving. *“... you will keep my commandments.”* Jesus had left a single commandment at the last supper. He had said *“ I leave you a new commandment ”* new does not mean added to others, but one of a better quality that replaces all others. And what is the commandment? *“May you love one another as I have loved you ”*.

So there is only one commandment. Why does Jesus say: *“..you will keep my commandments.”*

They are his commandments, not those of Moses. There is a single commandment, which is that of love, its external manifestation on all occasions in which it expresses itself, these are the commandments. Therefore they are not precepts external to man, but external manifestations of a profound inner reality.

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper,” This comes from the Greek word *“Paràclete”* that is untranslatable in our language. In the previous edition of the CEI there was an attempt to translate it incorrectly, with *“comforter”*, which is not right. What is the *paraclete*? The *paraclete* is a person who is called to help. Then it can be translated in various ways, but each of these does not fully render the Greek term. The nearest translation is *“helper”*

He would be the advocate in court, that is the defence lawyer, the intercessor. And in any case paraclete is not a name, but a function, which is the action of the Spirit. So we translate in an understandable way with " helper", the one who comes to the rescue. But with a difference. While paraclete is the one who is called to help, this action of the paraclete, of the Spirit in the Christian community takes place so that *"..to be with you forever,"*

That is, the presence of the Spirit is not only for dangerous situations, but it is constant. This is the guarantee that the community of Jesus has, that God does not come to meet in times of need or necessity, or suffering of the community, but God is always present and anticipates his action. Therefore the action of the helper is not realized only when it is invoked, when it is called, but it is constant and present in the community.

And Jesus continues: *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."* The evangelist in the Prologue had written that the Word had put his tent among us. Now Jesus realizes it. When there is this community of love, when this love received from God is communicated in love to the brothers, Jesus says "My Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him".

Man becomes the only true sanctuary from which the love, compassion and mercy of the Father radiates and manifests itself. The God of Jesus is not a God who asks for offerings, but it is he who offers himself to man, asks to be welcomed into his life, to expand his capacity to love, and make him the only true sanctuary. This declaration of Jesus is important. God can no longer be found in the temple, a temple where people had to go undergoing certain purification rites, a temple where some people could not set foot because they thought they were excluded, well this function of the new temple which is the person, the community of believers in Jesus, will have precisely as their orientation to go towards the excluded, towards the marginalized, towards the rejected.

Those who could not have access to the temple will now be the temple of God that will be with them. And Jesus continues: *"Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me."*

The word of the Father is a word that has an energy and a creative force. So it is the acceptance of this word that makes life in the community flourish. And Jesus concludes: *"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you."* We are near the end, soon Jesus will be arrested, but here again this term helper returns. *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, "*

For the first time Jesus calls the Spirit "Holy", which not only indicates the sublime quality of this Spirit, but the activity, that of sanctifying, that is, of separating those who receive it from the sphere of evil to attract it and lead it to the sphere of good.

"..whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." It is not a new message, but a wider understanding of Jesus' message. The action and presence of the Holy Spirit in the community will give it the ability to always offer new answers to the new needs of the people.