

The Advocate the Holy Spirit

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In today's gospel Jesus explains that, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and *we will come to them and make our home with them.*" He went on to explain that he wasn't going to be with his disciples very much longer, but the Father would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit would teach them and remind them of all that Jesus had said while he was with them.

Jesus is actually explaining the Holy Trinity to his disciples in today's gospel reading. He wasn't just teaching his disciples about his Father or the Holy Spirit though. Jesus didn't so much teach about love, he simply loved people. There is a big difference between understanding the Trinity, or simply experiencing the love that Jesus Christ and his Father personally has for us. We can talk about love and analyze love through many different angles kind of like a multicolored diamond, but intellectual understanding of God will never be the same thing as knowing Him.

Saint Thomas Aquinas tried. He wrote volumes about God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Saint Thomas Aquinas was the greatest theologian and intellectual thinker the Catholic church has ever known and he wrote a very famous book called the "Summa Theologica". If you ever want to read a good book that explains in great depth and detail, everything that could have ever been thought, comprehended, or understood about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit starting from scratch, then you should attempt to read this book. Just for the fun of it. Seriously. The book might take you a year to read, if you have the time that is. Many of us have to work and take care of our families and may not have the time to study this extensive, but magnificent volume of thoughts about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit though.

Don't feel too bad about it though. Saint Thomas Aquinas in the end, stopped writing about God dead in his tracks and never wrote another thing about him. Why, you may ask did he do this? Because Saint Thomas Aquinas had a single, genuine *experience* of God. After this experience, he said that everything he had ever thought or written about God was like so much straw.

If we genuinely love the Lord Jesus, we keep his commandments. Jesus knows this isn't an easy thing to do, but if our love for him is genuine then we will listen to his words and adhere to them. This is how we demonstrate our love for Jesus when we obey his commandments. It isn't a forced set of rules that we live by, but a yoke of love that we willingly take upon ourselves. We willingly allow these commandments, spoken by the One that we love most of all, to guide our lives. If we don't obey his commandments, then we really didn't love the Lord after all. If you truly love Jesus, there is no other that you seek. No human relationship will ever completely fulfill our need for God, but many

people do seem to abandon God and Jesus' church to seek comfort and fulfillment in other things, because they do not really know the Lord. You would never want to leave him if you did. Jesus and his Father will not "come and make their home" with those who do not genuinely love them, and listen to them. Would you want to live with people who do not genuinely love you and pay attention to you?

Jesus said that his Father would send the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to us, to teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus said to us. This isn't meant just for the disciples that lived over 2,000 years ago. This is profoundly true for us today too. This is the difference between intellectual learning of God and *knowing* God. It's a huge difference.

The Holy Spirit can impart knowledge to individuals in a few seconds or minutes, that would take a human being a lifetime to learn. It's like an instantaneous knowledge, a light bulb that switches on inside of you that comes out of nowhere. It isn't your own thoughts, because things are revealed to you that you have no knowledge or understanding of, until the Holy Spirit makes his presence known. When it is a genuine experience of the Holy Spirit, of God and Jesus' love for you, then there is no doubt about it. It sits with certainty on your soul. Your soul will be resting in absolute peace. The course of action, or clarification of a problem, or guidance that you may be seeking, will just suddenly come to you in a moment, giving clarity to a situation that you would have otherwise not grasped on your own.

This is why Jesus says the Holy Spirit is our *Advocate*, and will teach us everything we need to know and remind us of the truths that our Lord taught us. The Holy Spirit is also our *Advocate*, because he can refute the evils, ignorance and misunderstandings that other people may have about us, and about God. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, because the Holy Spirit heals our soul at it's deepest levels. He brings us peace, a deep down all the way to your bones kind of peace. There are dimensions to life as we know it, that is beyond our grasp to understand. We simply have to experience it. That is what happened to Saint Thomas Aquinas, but he isn't really all that unique of a human being in the history of the world, because you are too.

This is a good week to work on our prayer lives and if possible to go to mass, adoration or confession at least once this week. We do need to remember to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and not just in a general way either, but to believe in Him, and wait for His answer. Wait for Him to make his home with us. The Lord Jesus made his home with us through the Eucharist and the sacraments of our church in a very real and tangible way. However, there is more to the spiritual life than what we can know in the usual sense of things. We should try to find a little quiet in our days this week and devote ourselves to prayer and the sacraments and listen for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit who will come, as Jesus has promised, if we truly love him.