

*5th Sunday after Easter- EF 2014
John 16: 23-30
Dcn. Pat Hall*

It helps me to understand today's Gospel passage when I add the preceding verse:

So also you now indeed have sorrow: but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice. And your joy no man shall take from you.

Jesus is consoling his disciples at the Last Supper. They were having great difficulty in dealing with Jesus' need to depart. They did not understand.

Isn't it that way with all of us? We yearn. God reveals. We try to embrace and sometimes in our pride, we insist that we understand, sometimes to the point that we insist that others understand as we do, and yet in the end, we fall short.

But our falling short does not try the patience of God. He knows intimately well our insufficiencies. Yet he made us for Himself, for us to be objects of his love and for us to return his love by being instruments of his love for others. Even our insufficiencies are spaces for him to fill with his divine grace.

Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.

In that day, you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came out from God.

We need to be cautious that we don't take these words as giving us license to treat God as if he were a genie in a lamp at our disposal to grant our three wishes.

St Augustine wrote:

For when he says "in my name", we must understand that, not the sound of the letters and syllables, but what is truly and correctly signified by the sound.

*Accordingly, he who believes regarding Christ that which is not to be thought of concerning the Only Son of God, does not ask in His Name. But he who believes that which **is** to be held regarding Him, he truly asks in His Name, and shall receive what he is asking, if he seeks what is not opposed to his welfare.*

And he shall receive it when it is fitting that He shall receive it. For there are things which while not denied are withheld: to be given in a fitting time.ⁱ

So, what is truly and correctly signified by the sound of his name?

It is to know clearly where Jesus came from and to where he is going. To know that is to know Jesus. To know that is *to accept Jesus' public revelation of the Father on the cross: [that] the glory of God [shines] forth in and through the death of Jesus.* ⁱⁱ

This revelation through Jesus' sacrificial act changes the relationship between the disciples and the Father. Because *they have loved Jesus and believed that he had come from God, they will be swept into the love of the Father.*ⁱⁱⁱ

Through Jesus, our relationship has changed with our Father. He loves us as he loves his son, now and forever.

I have to look no further than my daughters-in-law to get a sense of how a relationship can change with someone through an act of another.

When one of my sons would bring home a girlfriend, Jan and I would treat her with kindness and hospitality. It was their relationship.

When, they got engaged, we would provide cheerful support to the fiancé, but it was still their relationship.

But with their Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, she would become our daughter. Still always respecting not to interfere in their relationship, she now had a relationship with us in that she could call upon us for anything that our own daughter had a right to call upon us as parents.

We love that daughter-in-law, for her own sake through the actions of the Marriage Sacrament. It is through that experience, that I can imagine through Christ's sacrifice on the cross... in his name... that we become the sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. We can call upon him just as his only begotten calls upon him. We call upon him with his love, the love that he shares with us through his son.

May Jesus' words of consolation to his disciples, console us today with the hope and promise of being one with our Father. Let us come in joyful communion to his altar today.

ⁱ St. Augustine, *PL 35, Tracts in John 102* as found in: *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, v. 2, p. 374

ⁱⁱ Francis J. Moloney, SDB, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina, p. 453

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid*