

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

May 5, 2013
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Gospel [Jn 14:23-29](#)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. "I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

ST·MATTHEW



ST·MARK



SAINT
JOHN



2013

Spiritual Reflection:

The following is from Cardinal Dolan's book: *Doers of the Word: Putting Your Faith into Practice*:

"Christ, yes! Church, no!

This seems to be the chant these days. It seems many want a King without a kingdom, a shepherd but not a sheepfold, a general with no army, a spiritual family where I am the only child; faith but no faithful.

Believe, yes. Belong no!

In short, they want Christ without his Church.

A recent published report on religion in America verifies this. A quarter of our people raised Catholic no longer consider themselves such. Some seem more loyal to the baseball team they cheered for as a kid than to the Church in which they were baptized and raised.

This, of course, is a sharp pastoral challenge to the Church. It cuts to the core of Catholicism, for, of course, we believe that Christ and His Church are one.

Jesus Christ and His Church are a packaged deal for Catholics.

Think about it: when our Lord ascended into heaven, forty days after He rose from the dead, His disciples could well have split up and gone their separate ways as individuals. They could have said, "Why stick around?" He's gone. I believe in Him. I'll go off on my own and try to live as he taught."

The first disciples would have one of that. "Stick together" was at the heart of His message. They believed in Him as a community, as a spiritual family. He was the vine; they were the branches. They were intimately united to Him and to each other. In company with His mother, they remained as one and prayed hard for the promised Holy Spirit. On Pentecost Sunday their prayers were answered.

So, from the very beginning, the Church was essential. Common prayer, unity in faith, mutual love and charity, Sunday Eucharist, rebirth into something beyond themselves by Baptism, strengthened in confirmation, sent out to invite others—these were the communal actions of the Church because the Church was Christ alive!

In other words, we are saved as part of His Church. This understanding of the unity between Christ and the Church moves us to rejoice in the Church as a golden bond keeping us tethered to Christ, not as handcuffs that we try to get unlocked.

As the Gospel says: He is the vine and we are the branches (see John 15:5)!"

Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit as an advocate and the Holy Spirit has chosen to work through the Church.

Spiritual Questions:

1. Why does Christ not give us peace the way the world does?
2. Why does God us the Church?
3. Why do people want to reject the Church today?
4. How does the Church keep us united to Christ?
5. Why is the Church the way that it is?