

Homily for VI (6) Sunday of Easter Year C 22-05-2022 by Fr. Lubem Waya, osj

First Reading: Acts 15:1-2,22-29

Psalm: Psalm 67

Second Reading: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

Gospel: John 14:23-29

WHAT CAN GOD'S SPIRIT DO FOR US?

For anything to thrive at all, it must cope with the dynamics of change. For this, Winston Churchill would insist that; "to improve is to change, and to be perfect is to change often." Such a change is presumed to be positive-oriented. The life of the Church has not been any different from this. With the extension of Christian membership to non-Jewish peoples, that is, pagans and gentiles, for the first time being a major change in the expansion of Church membership, there arose also a great controversy. This was whether or not these non-Jewish Christians should be subjected to the observance of the Jewish cultural Mosaic law on circumcision before they can be saved. They all wondered, could the spirit of the Risen Christ dwell also in these uncircumcised peoples? Moments of confusion such as this, are also potential moments of growth. However, we must remain faithful to the love of God in us which pushes us in such moments not to break camp, but to first seek discernment in unity as God's family under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This keeps us in observance of Christ's injunction, 'where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them (cf. Matt.18:20)'. In this case, the apostles convoked the First Council of Jerusalem where under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they discerned God's will that circumcision wasn't necessary for salvation but only faith in God and obedience to His will. This is what can guarantee the dwelling of the Holy Spirit within us. Do you have faith in God? Our level of faith is shown in how faithful we are to His will.

The importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives cannot be overemphasized as Christ states in a portion of His final discourses today. He says the Spirit is to be the Advocate for the Church performing two principal functions; teaching us everything we should know as regards our salvation, and reminding us of all that Christ has taught us. But what has Christ taught us apart from love? Today He teaches again this greatest commandment of love. He says, 'if anyone loves me, he will keep my word.' That means, our love for Christ is going to be tested in different ways but can be proven only by our obedience to His will. Once we pass this test, then, we shall begin to receive the threefold reward that comes from loving Him. That is, God will also love us in turn, come to us, and make a home with us.

For God to love us, signifies that God desires our greatest good and will not spare anything for our sake, even if it means allowing us to pass through some momentary trials and sufferings as He did to Job. But can we remain faithful and obedient to Him in the face of adversity? These are the decisive moments of our lives when sometimes we question God. We wonder why despite all the good we are doing we still experience misfortunes. At times we begin to feel that we are cursed. However, let us not forget that sometimes bad things happen to good people, but that doesn't mean that God is punishing them or that He is not in control. What are you going through at the moment? Hang in there, He is with you. Like Job, if we love God and remain faithful to Him even in adversity, He doesn't abandon us. St. Paul clearly aware of this reminds us too that 'in all things God works for the good of those who love Him...(cf. Romans 8:28).' Why is it so? It is because He always keeps His promises. He says if we love Him, He will come to us and dwell in us. That love keeps us united with Him perpetually and that is why if we truly love Him, we can feel His peace even in the face of troubles. His peace does not eschew unpleasantness in life, rather it conquers our fears and anxieties such that we can find joy in the face of sorrow, safety in danger and tribulation, and satisfaction even when in want. Because it is His Holy Spirit helping us in those moments of our weakness that strengthens us with His gifts, enabling us to rise above our passions and anxieties. Why not invite Him into your life today? Come, Lord Jesus! May He dispose us to receive Him when He comes to dwell within us. Amen.