

**The Reflection from Pastor Fr. John
Carlos, Holy Cross Church, Harrison, NJ,
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THE ADVOCATE

This Sunday's gospel is an extract from Jesus' farewell speech at the Last Supper, where the Holy Spirit promises his disciples that: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth".

Jesus offers us expressions that are found in the gospel of this Sunday related to the Holy Spirit. 1) He is the Advocate. Throughout history, Christians will be criticized, despised and humiliated. In the face of these difficulties, we will always have the Holy Spirit who will animate us. 2) He is the Spirit of Truth, that is, he is closely related to the revelation of Jesus. It is the Spirit who will help us to deepen his saving message and to live it in life. 3) Finally, Jesus promises the permanent presence of the Spirit: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always". Returning to Heaven, Jesus does not leave his disciples orphans ("I will not leave you orphans"). The Holy Spirit will always be with us, animating the Church.

Jesus makes reference to the importance of the following binomial: unity of faith – life: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments". Believing presupposes a concrete way of acting. Following Christ does not end with accepting a set of ideas and principles, but it presupposes a certain way of life. The collected prayer affirms: "what we relive in remembrance we may always hold to in what we do". In prayer after communion, we ask: "increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this paschal Sacrament and pour into our hearts the strength of this saving food". To reveal himself to someone, Jesus requires a moral implication of faith: "Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him".

Confident in this reality, we can feel strength and courage to face the difficulties that life brings, especially those in this pandemic time.

May the Risen Lord continue to bless us with his presence and peace during this Easter Season!

Father John Carlos