

MAY 10 2026 MSGR. ROBERT NUSCA

As we continue our Easter journey and prepare to celebrate the Feasts of the Ascension next Sunday, and Pentecost in two weeks, this Sunday's Gospel is taken again from Our Lord's "Farewell Discourse," found only in the Gospel of John. In this lengthy address to the disciples at the Last Supper, Jesus aims to prepare them for His departure from this world.

And in this Farewell Discourse, we are led to contemplate the words of a very mystical, cosmic, otherworldly Jesus who – as St. John shows us – is nothing less than the Logos, the Wisdom of God and the Word made flesh. For as we have heard, Jesus offers a very consoling and hope-filled message, as He reassures His followers that He will not abandon them. And several things emerge for our reflection.

First, as Jesus assures His disciples, He will not leave them as orphans. He promises to send them another Paraclete or Advocate to assist them, referring to the Holy Spirit. Here, it is important to note that when Jesus speaks of sending the disciples another Paraclete, He is clearly implying that He Himself is our first Paraclete.

This word "Paraclete," has, in fact, a number of shades of meaning. Derived from the language of the legal system of Our Lord's time, in the first instance, the Paraclete or Advocate is a person who offers guidance and assistance. At the same time, the word Paraclete can also be translated as "Counsellor," or "Comforter" who helps a person during a time of difficulty.

Indeed, in the 1st Letter of John we read that, Jesus is Our Advocate or mediator with God the Father. Jesus is the "righteous one" who pleads our case before God in heaven, seeking forgiveness for our sinfulness. The role of the Holy Spirit on the other hand, will be to abide both in

and with the faithful on earth, and so continue the saving work of Christ in the Church and world.

Second, Our Lord calls us not only to follow His teachings and to imitate Him in our interactions with others, but through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us, He leads us to become a new creation in Christ. Here, St. Basil the Great comments that: “Through the Spirit we are restored to Paradise, we ascend to the kingdom of heaven... We are thus called children of light; as we come to share in eternal glory—in short, every elevated thing that we can name or conceive is accomplished in us through the Paraclete.”

In his Letters St. Paul speaks of our being radically transformed in the depths of our being, as we come to share in the mystery of Christ’s own nature, and become truly Christ-like. With regard to the process of growth in the spiritual life, St. Paul reminds us in his Letter to the Ephesians of the need to ‘Cast off the old self...to be renewed in the spirit of our minds; and in so doing to strive always to put on that new self, created to be like God in all righteousness and holiness.’

The means of sanctification, have been given to us. The sacrament of confession, frequent reception of the Eucharist; a time of daily prayer; fasting and asceticism;

A daily act of will by which we choose to stand with God and with Jesus with the power of good against the forces of evil; and Consecration to Jesus through Mary. In this way, we see how the radical call by name to leave everything behind and follow Jesus, proves to be a call to something more than servanthood. For much more than “servants” or “friends,” Jesus calls us to become members of a new spiritual family and so ultimately to enter onto the road toward a profound lifelong journey of great spiritual transformation.

Far too often ignored are Our Lord's words in the context immediately preceding today's Gospel where He says: "Whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." Saints Irenaeus, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas all articulate clearly the Church's teaching that "God became what we are in order that we might become what He is." This idea is stated very clearly in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Paragraph 460, where we read that: "The Word became flesh to make us partakers of the divine nature."

More recently, St. Jose Maria Escriva leads us to reflect upon our Baptismal call to holiness as he writes that: "Each of us is to be ipse Christus: Christ himself in this passing world...Our calling to be children of God, in the midst of the world, requires us not only to seek our own personal holiness, but also to go out onto all the ways of the earth, to transform them into roads that will carry souls over all obstacles and lead them to the Lord."

Third, while the Holy Spirit functions as counselor, strengthening and guiding us to the truth, He also reminds us of Our Lord's teachings and strengthens us to proclaim the Gospel. Indeed, the Spirit inspires us to proclaim the truth boldly before a world that is – and has always been – hostile to the Gospel.

Jesus sends us forth into the world as His representatives, indeed, as Ambassadors, and what a great challenge that is for us today. For we live in a time when the secular world's understanding of truth is very relative; and its understanding of goodness is divorced from the reality of our transcendent God. Its understanding of freedom is so radically different in our own, in this postmodern, post-truth era.

Here, Pope Benedict reminds us that: “true freedom, the freedom of the children of God, is found only in the self-surrender which is part of the mystery of love... True freedom blossoms when we turn away from the burden of sin, which clouds our perceptions and weakens our resolve, and find the source of our ultimate happiness in God who is infinite love, infinite freedom, infinite life.”

As we continue to celebrate this Mass, and to give thanks to God for so many graces today: let us pray for the grace to live our lives as a people who are a new creation in Christ. Let us pray for the grace to be always a priestly, royal people; a people who are called, consecrated, and sent out by God to live the Gospel to the fullest; to continue doing God’s own work on earth; and, as Jesus says to: “bear fruit, fruit that will last.”