

Alleluia, alleluia! / All who love me will keep my words, / and my Father will love them and we will come to them. / Alleluia!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

*I shall ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.*

Jesus said to his disciples:

'If you love me you will keep my commandments.  
I shall ask the Father,  
and he will give you another Advocate  
to be with you for ever,  
that Spirit of truth  
whom the world can never receive  
since it neither sees nor knows him;  
but you know him,  
because he is with you, he is in you.  
I will not leave you orphans;  
I will come back to you.  
In a short time the world will no longer  
see me;  
but you will see me,  
because I live and you will live.  
On that day  
you will understand that I am in my Father  
and you in me and I in you.  
Anybody who receives my commandments  
and keeps them  
will be one who loves me  
and anybody who loves me will be loved by  
my Father,  
and I shall love him and show myself to him.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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# Reflections on the Gospel

## 'AT HOME' WITH GOD

In last week's Gospel Jesus reflected on two understandings of his 'going away' and 'return': first, his going away in death and his re-appearance three days later as risen Lord; second, his more final departure to the Father, to return only at the end of time. The section from Jesus' instruction that we hear today focuses upon that second, much longer period of absence.

As far as the non-believing world is concerned, Jesus will simply have ceased to exist. Believers, however, will continue to 'see' him with the eyes of faith and experience his presence in this way.

In loving him and keeping his commandments, they will participate in the mutual love that unites Father and Son, both of whom will 'make their home' within them. Though deprived of Jesus' physical presence, they and God will be mutually 'at home' in this sense.

In this connection Jesus speaks of 'another Paraclete' whom he will ask the Father to give. A 'paraclete' is someone who stands beside a person in time of difficulty, a supportive and encouraging presence. We might think, for example, of a highly respected person whom we might ask to go to court with us to act as a character witness. Though Jesus will no longer be physically present to carry out this role, the community will have 'another paraclete' in the shape of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the world's hostility and doubt, the 'Spirit of truth' will offer reassurance that what they believe and seek to live by is the most profound truth.

■ **Brendan Byrne, SJ**



# THE SAVING WORD

## FIRST READING

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

*They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Philip went to a Samaritan town and proclaimed the Christ to them. The people united in welcoming the message Philip preached, either because they had heard of the miracles he worked or because they saw them for themselves. There were, for example, unclean spirits that came shrieking out of many who were possessed, and several paralytics and cripples were cured. As a result there was great rejoicing in that town.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, and they went down there, and prayed for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, for as yet he had not come down on any of them: they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## RESP PSALM

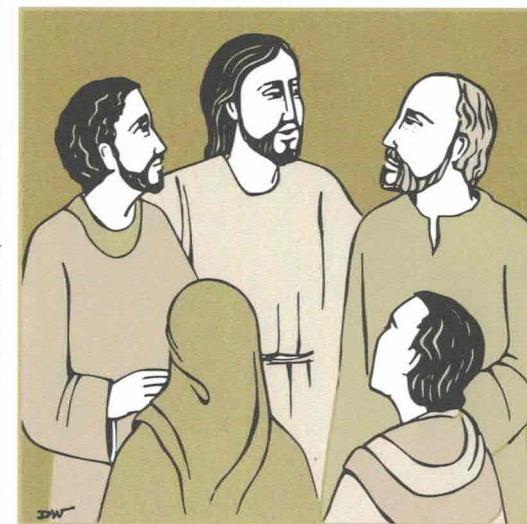
Ps 65:1-7, 16, 20. R. cf. v. 2

**R. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. (or Alleluia.)**

1. Cry out with joy to God all the earth, / O sing to the glory of his name. / O render him glorious praise. / Say to God: 'How tremendous your deeds! **R.**

2. 'Before you all the earth shall bow; / shall sing to you, sing to your name!' / Come and see the works of God, / tremendous his deeds among men. **R.**

3. He turned the sea into dry land, / they passed through the river dry-shod. / Let our joy then be in him; / he rules for ever by his might. **R.**



4. Come and hear, all who fear God. / I will tell what he did for my soul: / Blessed be God who did not reject my prayer / nor withhold his love for me. **R.**

## SECOND READING

1 Pet 3:15-18

A reading from the first letter of St Peter

*In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.*

Reverence the Lord Christ in your hearts, and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have. But give it with courtesy and respect and with a clear conscience, so that those who slander you when you are living a good life in Christ may be proved wrong in the accusations that they bring. And if it is the will of God that you should suffer, it is better to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong.

Why, Christ himself, innocent though he was, had died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life.

■ **The word of the Lord.**