

6th Sunday of Easter (Lectionary: 57)

John 14:15–21

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

When Michele, my beloved bride, and I were 23, we packed our few belongings into a U-Haul and moved to Shreveport, Louisiana. She had a job waiting. I was starting medical school. We were young, inexperienced, and walking away from everything familiar—our families, our support, our comfort zones.

We didn't know much about God back then. Our faith was shallow. Our prayer life was mostly absent. But we did love each other—deeply, genuinely. And somehow, that love gave us the courage to step into the unknown. We believed that if we had each other, we'd be okay. Our love would be enough.

We were right. But we didn't yet understand why.

In today's Gospel, Jesus is preparing His disciples for their own leap into the unknown. He's about to leave them—not just in death, but in His Ascension. And He gives them both a challenge and a promise: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments,” and

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit... will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

He’s telling them: If your love for me is real, it will guide you. That love will become your compass.

But Jesus isn’t calling them into sentimentality. He’s calling them into mission. To love Him is to obey Him. And to obey Him means to live as He lived: sacrificially, generously, for others. Love isn’t passive—it demands everything.

Love, at its heart, is sacrifice.

And Jesus knows how difficult that will be. That’s why He doesn’t say, “Figure it out.” He says, “You won’t be alone.” The Holy Spirit will come—not just to inspire, but to strengthen, to guide, to carry us when we can’t take another step.

That same Spirit lives in us now. The plan hasn’t changed in 2,000 years. Through His Church, through baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist, Christ breathes His very life into us. The sacraments feed us. The Church surrounds us. The Spirit empowers us.

And we need that strength—because we’ve inherited the same mission given to the Apostles: to carry Christ’s love into the world.

And this love isn't tame. It's not polite or easy. It's radical. It means loving the person who annoys us, forgiving the one who hurt us, telling the truth when it costs us, serving when we'd rather rest, choosing virtue when no one's watching.

This kind of love will take from us. But that's the point.

Love isn't a feeling. It's a holy offering. When we love like Christ, we will be asked to give something of ourselves. And yet, in that very sacrifice, we find joy—not in holding on, but in pouring ourselves out for the One who gave everything for us. That's when the Spirit breathes through us. That's how Christ remains with us—alive in every act of love.

So, I return to that little U-Haul in Shreveport. That move was our first real sacrifice. We didn't know it then, but God was already at work. Over 27 years, our love has matured into something deeper—through service, forgiveness, and showing up when it's hard. And we've come to see that what has sustained us all along isn't just our love for each other, but God's love alive in us.

That's the promise of today's Gospel: that true, sacrificial love is never ours to carry alone. The Spirit is with us—strengthening,

reminding, abiding. And if we let His love live in us, no matter what lies ahead, we will be okay.

Because a love like that will always find the way forward.

So now, brothers and sisters, go. Go and love—not with half a heart, not with convenience or comfort, but with the full weight of your life. Love Jesus by keeping His commandments. Love Him by loving the people He's given you—especially the ones who are hardest to love. Open your heart wide to the Spirit, and do not be afraid to be changed, stretched, or poured out. Let Christ live through you, breathe through you, speak and serve through you.

Because the world does not need more noise or ambition—it needs witnesses. And when love becomes your witness, the Holy Spirit becomes your voice.

Let Him speak. Let Him love. Let Him live in you.