

Opening the Word: Abide in Christ



How do we see God? How do we remain with God? These are the two pressing questions present in this passage from John's Gospel that the Church gives us on the Sixth Sunday of Easter.

The Church these past few weeks has drawn us back to Holy Thursday, to the words the Lord spoke to his disciples the night he was betrayed. The Church wants us to remember these words, seeing them not only in the dim dusk before Jesus' crucifixion, but now also in the light of his resurrection and the beginning dawn of Pentecost. Because these words speak to us, too, not just the Twelve – today and not just then.

The disciples knew he was going. Jesus said so. He called it his "exodus," his passing from the world to the Father (cf. Lk 9:31; Jn 13:1). Jesus also said that soon the world wouldn't see him, but that the disciples would see him. Which is why Judas ("not the Iscariot") put to Jesus the obvious question: How? (cf. Jn 14:22). It's a question that prompted this answer: "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him" (Jn 14:23).

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of Easter](#)

Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

Rev 21:10-14, 22-23

Jn 14:23-29

That's how the disciples will see Jesus, even when the world doesn't: because and by means of love. But it's not just affection or memory; it's life-giving love. As Jesus said, "You will see me, because I live and you will live" (Jn 14:19).

What leads to life with Christ and the Father is love. To love Jesus is to live with him. To love Jesus is to receive the indwelling of the Father and the Son by the power of the Spirit. Jesus here is inviting his disciples to a communion more than earthly. Physically, at least as they experienced Jesus in the past, he would no longer be present, but he was offering them so much more.

To see this takes a little vocabulary study. The word translated as "dwelling" is *mone*, and it's related to another important word John often uses, which is *menein*. The former is a noun meaning "dwelling." The latter is a verb meaning "to abide" or "to remain." Now, the reason this is important is because John uses the verb *menein* to describe how the Spirit remains on Jesus (cf. Jn 1:32) and how Jesus remains in the Father (Jn 14:10). That is, by using the word *mone*, a word related to *menein*, John is telling us that by loving Jesus truly, we will dwell with him in a way like the Father and the Spirit dwell with him.

The invitation Jesus extends the disciples is literally divine; it's nothing less than a call to "share in the divine nature" (2 Pt 1:4). How do we see God? How do we remain in God? By divine indwelling is the incredible answer. Which is as true for us today as it was for the first disciples. Jesus answers these questions eternally, and he can, because he and the Father are one (cf. Jn 10:30). Which is why we're reading these words now in the light of Easter, millennia later. Because, being divine, they're still true.

But, finally, of course, we should note our part, that we must "keep" Jesus's word (Jn 14:23). That is the measure of our

love for Jesus; we can't just say we love him. To keep his word is to keep his commandments, simple as that (cf. Jn 15:10). Which flips the questions we began with, putting them back on us. Do we want to see God? Do we want to remain with God? What we make of obedience is how we'll answer those questions.

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