

May 22, 2022
Sixth Sunday of Easter C
Bulletin Reflection
Fr. Ed Smith

Acts 15: 1-2, 22-29; Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23; John 14: 23-29

As we progress through the month of May, with its graduations, it comes to mind how difficult it is to say goodbye to people we know and love. Whether someone is going off to high school, college, moving to a different city, or taking a job across the ocean, it is never easy to say our farewells. Often, we do not know what words to use, especially if we are not sure when we will see one another again. How can we let someone know what we want for them? How do we show them how much we care? Perhaps a thoughtful reading of this weekend's Gospel might help us. It is from Jesus' own "farewell discourse" in the Gospel of John. And there is a dazzling list of items that appear one after the other as He prepares to leave His disciples: Love, the Holy Spirit, and Peace. All offered to those to whom Jesus was saying 'goodbye'. Imagine how the disciples must have felt upon hearing about such wondrous realities. First, Jesus teaches that LOVE involves an intimate relationship with Him; and through Him, unity with the Father. We are part of a family. Second, He speaks of the HOLY SPIRIT, who is the perfection of love, since the Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. The promise of the Spirit is the gift of the Risen Jesus to His people. We are participants in perfect love: the community of the Trinity. Third, Jesus states "PEACE I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Christ's peace is the inner peace of the disciple who knows the Father's love and who loves Him in return. This gives us the tranquility of a true believer: all will be well because we know that God is deeply involved in our lives. After this, Jesus speaks of His return to the Father. And even though the disciples will not have Jesus standing beside them any longer, it is in His triumphant return to the Father in heaven that Jesus bestows on His people the gifts they need to live out their faith. Our task is to embrace the gifts we are given, to trust in the One who promised them to us, and to pray daily that we may live as part of God's family, sharing in Love and Peace of the Spirit. Therefore, the "goodbye" of Jesus, with its sadness, is also an occasion for great rejoicing. He knows how to take care of us. And how to say a 'goodbye' filled with hope and peace!