

Jesus is getting ready to leave. These chapters in the Gospel of John are known to NT scholars as “The Farewell Discourses”. And so Jesus wants His disciples to know beforehand what will take place after He is gone. The ironic thing is that after He is gone, He will still be here.

The Presence of God is what it’s all about. We understand God to be omniscient, all knowing. We believe Him to be omnipotent, all powerful. But He is also omnipresent, He is everywhere at all times.

We talk about coming into the presence of the Lord when we die. But we’ve never been anywhere else, because there isn’t anywhere else we could be.

Psalm 139 says,

Where can I go from your spirit?

From your presence, where can I flee?

<sup>8</sup> If I ascend to the heavens, you are there;  
if I lie down in Sheol, there you are.

<sup>9</sup> If I take the wings of dawn<sup>[c]</sup>

and dwell beyond the sea,

<sup>10</sup> Even there your hand guides me,  
your right hand holds me fast.

The Lord is present everywhere and at all times. He is in His Kingdom in Heaven, and He is here among us even now because we are gathered together in His name. He is present in Holy Eucharist. He is

present in His Holy Gospel. God the Father and God the Son dwell in the hearts of those who believe in Him.

If Jesus could have His way, everyone would see Him and know Him. He came into this world for everyone, not just a few, not a select group with certain qualities or characteristics. He came to be the Lord and Savior of every man, woman and child who ever lived. But only some people can see that truth, not all. We are all of us in His presence every moment of our lives, but only a few of the many can see this.

Even though Jesus knows in advance that He will be arrested, sentenced to death, and crucified, He also knows that the Holy Spirit is coming. Jesus foretells the coming of Pentecost.

Jesus is leaving this world, and He is not leaving this world. He tells us He is not leaving us alone, as if we were abandoned children. He is most certainly not abandoning anyone in any way, shape or form. We are not and never have been alone.

Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit. Through God's Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, God the Father and God the Son are present to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

And how do we, His followers, both then and today, love Him once He is no longer physically present to us?

In the beginning of John's Gospel, we are told that Jesus is the Word made flesh. John says

And the Word became flesh<sup>[1]</sup>

and made his dwelling among us,  
and we saw his glory,  
the glory as of the Father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth

And now that Jesus has been crucified, resurrected and ascended, we who are His followers, we put flesh to His Word. We are His body in this world. We are His hands, His feet and His voice. Jesus gives us His Holy Spirit to make us His Church, and His Church is enlivened and empowered by the presence and working of the Holy Spirit to love God and to keep Jesus's commandments, and to continue His ministry until He comes again.

The unbelieving world ought to be able to see His glory, just as John did. But the unbelieving world doesn't want to know. They saw Him at the time, but they did not know Him. The unbelieving world now neither sees nor knows Him.

We can show our love for Jesus Christ now by doing what He says, by being His Church, by seeing Him and knowing His Real Presence and living as His beloved children.

If we do that, some of those who do not yet believe, just might, see His glory. They might see it in those who belong to Jesus if we are forgiving, if we practice self-denial, if we are a source of peace and healing, if we love one another as He commanded us.

The presence of God, and the gift of the Holy Spirit are Jesus's gift to His followers as He foretells of the creation of His Church. These are present realities

for us, and they are our hope and our salvation.

Amen.