

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

Pastor – Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Victoria, BC, Canada

Today, in the Gospel of St. John, Jesus gives us a profound assurance: “I will not leave you orphaned.” These words come from the heart of Christ just before His departure to the Father. He knows the fears and uncertainties of His disciples, and He promises to send them the Spirit of truth, the *Paraclete*, who will remain with them forever.

Jesus said: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” Obedience to Christ is not mere obligation; it is the language of love. When we keep His commandments, we allow Him to dwell within us. We are in Him and He is in us. Through the Holy Spirit we are no longer abandoned or alone, but beloved children of God, embraced by His abiding presence.

St. Peter echoes this truth in the second reading: “In your hearts, sanctify Christ as Lord.” What a beautiful invitation; to make Christ the centre of our hearts so that every thought, every word, and every action flows from His love. The late Bishop Fulton J. Sheen once said: “We were made for love; we were made for God.” When Christ truly reigns within us, our lives become rooted in hope, peace, and charity.

Similarly, John Henry Newman reminds us that holiness is found not only in extraordinary moments, but also in ordinary daily life. We follow Christ through simple acts of love: being patient in moments of frustration; forgiving those who hurt us; listening to someone who is lonely; speaking kindly when anger would be easier; or making time for prayer amidst a busy day. In these hidden moments, Christ quietly lives through us. These ordinary acts become extraordinary when they are filled with love. A small gesture of compassion, a gentle word, a silent prayer for another person; these are signs that the Spirit of God is alive within us. They remind



us that Christian life is not simply about believing in Jesus from a distance, but about allowing His presence to shape the way we live each day.

The wisdom of Teresa of Ávila beautifully deepens today's Gospel. She wrote: "Christ has no body now but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours." Through us, Christ continues His work in the world. When we comfort the grieving, feed the hungry, visit the lonely, or encourage the discouraged, Christ Himself is present through our love.

Saint Teresa also described prayer as "an intimate sharing between friends." How fitting this is for today's Gospel, where Jesus says: "I no longer call you servants... I have called you friends." Jesus desires not a distant relationship, but closeness and communion. He invites us to speak to Him honestly, to trust Him with our struggles and fears, and to rest in the certainty that He remains with us always.

My dear friends, this is our Christian hope. We are not orphans wandering through life without meaning or direction. We belong to Christ. His Spirit dwells within us. And every time we love, forgive, pray, and serve, we make His presence visible in the world.

May our lives become reflections of that abiding love so that others, through us, may encounter the living Christ; the One who never abandons His people and the One who remains with us always.