

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus has a farewell gift for all of his followers. It's not just a greeting of good will for the future, as He is about to leave them, but it's an offering of peace He wants them to have, that will take shape in the presence of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit will be a presence of all the actions and the promises that Jesus had given to them, and will continue to make a difference in them. Jesus is not abandoning them, but instead giving them a true gift of peace.

The Gospel tells us: “. . . the Holy Spirit, . . . will teach you everything and will remind you of all that I told you.”

From Jesus' mouth today, we have a pretty interesting description of the activity of the Holy Spirit. We may think of Him as our guide, and our protector, and perhaps even our friend in times of trouble. But how many of us would describe the Holy Spirit, as a guy who reminds us of stuff that we need to remember? Well, that's the image that is used by Jesus in today's Gospel. As we just heard, Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would remind them of all that he had told them. So what exactly has Jesus told them? Well, these apostles had been with Him for three solid years, and you would think that He told them quite a bit, and that He gave them some pretty great advice. And even a few of his apostles, John and Matthew in particular, wrote about some of the things He said in their Gospels.

So in Sacred Scripture, we can read a sampling of Jesus' sayings and even hear some of His parables. But even though we don't have the privilege of hearing all of Jesus' words in the Gospels, we can probably summarize Jesus' preaching in a few sentences: For example, we probably will remember he told the multitudes that the Kingdom is at hand, that love should be the foundation of our moral life, and that God is willing to forgive us, and that our life in Jesus can be eternal.

But the apostles heard and probably understood much, much more of what Jesus had to tell them. And that's where the Holy Spirit comes in. They needed to be reminded of all that He told them, and they needed to share it with others, so it could be passed down in their writings, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and in all of the Oral Tradition that has been passed down through the ages to the rest of us!

So if it's true that the Holy Spirit came to the apostles to remind them of all that Jesus tried to tell them, then the Spirit is also a voice that calls each of us to a complete life in God. Because we know that living a Christian life is not easy. Life can be complicated --- and that's precisely why we should never try to go at it alone, and why we should never presume that we have all the answers, or the best plan. Rather, we need to rely on the God who dwells in each of us, and also the Holy Spirit, who was promised to us by Jesus at baptism and confirmation.

Almost all of us seem to think that we have better than average memories. But every once in a while, someone has to remind us of something that wasn't on our radar, something we would otherwise have neglected to do. And the reminder they give us will make a huge difference in how things turn out. These reminders can become lifesavers, and sometimes a gentle reminder can save the day for us.

So when we hear that quiet voice speaking to us or when we feel that gentle tap on the shoulder, let's not ignore it. Let's recognize it for what it is, because it's probably our God trying to remind us of something of great importance, with words of wisdom from the Holy Spirit, who is Wisdom itself. So, just in case we might forget . . . may we always listen closely for the Holy Spirit to “remind us” of things, just like He did for the apostles, for what is most important in our lives, and then try our very best to follow those reminders of what He's trying to tell us.