

Learning Together Easter 6 Covid-19 – The Advocate

One of the things Jesus talked about often with his disciples was the importance of showing love. He told them “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Now, the disciples had all been raised to know the ten commandments of Moses that said not to kill or steal or be jealous of each other, but Jesus made the commandments much simpler than that. His commandments were to “love God, love each other, and love yourself.” Which makes sense, because when you love someone, you generally don’t steal from them or kill them.

The disciples were a little worried, though. Jesus taught them so many wonderful things, but he couldn’t always be there with them, so Jesus told them “I will send you an advocate to be with you forever.” Do you know what the word “advocate” means? It means someone who offers support for a person or a cause. Then Jesus named who the “advocate” was by saying, “This is the Spirit of truth.” Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come, which did happen at Pentecost. We will talk about that more in a couple more Sundays.

I wonder how you might feel the Holy Spirit in your life? You might know the Holy Spirit as that voice inside you that tells you what is the right and loving thing to do. You might know the Holy Spirit as the way you feel inside when something really special happens, like you see a beautiful sunset, or hear special music, or watch someone do something extra kind for someone that just makes you feel good inside. You might know the Holy Spirit in finding courage when you are afraid. You might feel the Holy Spirit in the love and support of a friend. There are all kinds of ways different people feel the Holy Spirit at different times.

Just like with the disciples, the Holy Spirit is there to help us to keep Jesus’ commandments. Do you remember what those commandments are? There are three of them: to love, God, to love each other and to love yourself.” My challenge to you this week is to do something on purpose that keeps each of those three commandments. Choose three different things to do, one to show love to God, one to show love to other people, and one to show love for yourself. You can let the Holy Spirit guide you as to what to do, but I am going to give you some suggestions.

One good way we can show love for God is to make time in our day to listen to God – sometimes people call this meditating. Take some time for silence. If you can, go outside, close your eyes, and listen to the sounds of the world around you. Try not to think too much about the sounds, just be still and notice what you hear. Sometimes it helps to breathe deeply and count the different sounds you hear. Do you hear birds? Cars? A clock ticking? Wind? What is happening all around you in that very moment?

For the next commandment, think about how you might show love to other people. It could be helping someone in your house with chores. It could be sending a letter to someone you can’t visit with in person right now. It could be going out and writing nice things on the sidewalk with a piece of chalk for strangers to read as they walk by. I bet

you can come up with some great ideas, especially if you take a little time to think about it, and ask the Holy Spirit to help guide you!

And finally, do something nice for yourself. Maybe you like bubble baths? You could take a nice long bath. Maybe you could put on some music you really like and listen or maybe even dance to it, if you like dancing. Build a fort and snuggle up inside it with a good book. How about making a cup of tea or hot chocolate and going out and looking at the moon some evening? Paint your toenails. Fix up your bike. Take a nap when you're tired. Use your fancy dinner dishes for an ordinary meal. I'm sure you can think of something special to do as a treat for yourself!

Join me in this echo prayer:

Dear God...thank you for loving us....Help us to show love to others...and ourselves...and to you...in all we do...Amen.