

YR B Pentecost  
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**John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

*Buckle up, buttercup!*

Six years ago, I sat in a lawyer's office signing my name to contracts that would transfer control of a business to the person across the table from me. He was 20 years younger than me and eager to put ink on the paper. Becoming President of a business was a moment he anticipated with excitement.

But, as the person retiring from that role, my inside voice was saying, "Buckle up, buttercup".

My outside voice said, "I'll always be a phone call away."

*Pause*

Last Sunday evening, St. Martin's lectionary study group reflected on today's Gospel reading. One line stood out to me: Jesus said to his disciples, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

This conversation takes place after the Maundy Thursday dinner, after he was washed their feet. They've have been with him for three years...they are not novices. To follow Him has already been costly: they left behind vocations, family, and home. They have witnessed his teaching, healing, and the many signs of His Divinity.

They are friends. The love in the upper room is mutual.

Yet, Jesus is aware of what will come. He knows the hardship each of these disciples will endure in the days and years to come. On the eve of his own death, he knows they cannot bear to hear the Truth.

And so he makes a promise to them...and to us: The Spirit of Truth, the Advocate, will come among us and guide us. It's as if he says, I'll always be a phone call ... or prayer ... away."

*Pause*

Today, we are honoring 3 high school graduates. They are on the cusp of adulthood...looking toward college life in Texas and in far-away places like Michigan. It's a heady time for these students.

As I was thinking about how St. Martin's will send you forth, I revisited an old black and white film called *The Bells of St. Mary's*. Near the end of the movie, Fr O'Malley is giving a commencement address. He reminds the students that their families and the people of St. Mary's have invested deeply in them. And all that they have learned is now inside them...

You have gathered knowledge, wisdom, and skills...You've learned to be an acolyte and a thurifer, you demonstrated hospitality by choosing to offer your musical talents in the choir loft, you learned to accept and love people as they are. Our graduates take these gifts with them when they leave. O'Malley's point is that they are *not* your gifts *to keep*.

They are your gifts *to give* to the community that surrounds you...wherever and whatever you call "home".

You have been nurtured spiritually in this place. As each of you shared your St. Martin's experience, we heard the gentle influences of *this* Body of Christ. This is a place where each person is welcomed, loved, and invited to flourish.

One of my favorite Taize songs is called *Ubi Caritas et amor, Deus ibi est*. It means, where this is charity and love, there is God.

It is what all of us experience at St. Martin-in-the-Fields....The intangible quality of this community that is so hard for people to name. God is in this place...in us and through us.

*Pause*

This is the particular soil into which your parents chose to plant your spiritual lives. Your roots are deep. You are ready for the world....this does not imply that the every day will be easy.

Jesus knew the disciples, and all of Creation, would have experiences that we aren't prepared to bear alone. And so Jesus sends the Holy Spirit into Creation to be our advocate and guide.

When life presents you with those "Buckle up Buttercup" moments, remember that you are rooted in the Spirit of Truth, the Love of God, and the life of Christ. And St. Martin's is just a phone call and a prayer away.