



Reflection from Ben Babaran

In today's Gospel, Jesus gives his disciples the main teaching of his ministry - LOVE. The important idea he wants them to remember about love is that it involves sacrifice, sacrificing one's will to the will of the Father. At times, this is easy to do. Most of the times, however, it is very difficult. But doing so brings the blessing of God's presence in one's life. "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him."

The Holy Spirit is the second blessing Jesus gives anyone who loves him. As our guide, the Holy Spirit will help us understand Jesus' love for us. Just as the Holy Spirit influenced the apostles in their dilemma at the Council of Jerusalem in the first reading, the Holy Spirit is our "Advocate" now as we go through the complexities of today's life.

As we enter the implementation period of the deanery pastoral plan, we need our "Advocate" now more than ever to guide the family of parishes in Midtown KC in developing collaborative programs to insure the vitality of each parish. The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that, with all its blessings and resources, the Church will still face practical problems in carrying out its mission – problems that must be patiently resolved, in a fraternal spirit open to the guidance that is promised from on high.

We mourn the death of the ten black people in Buffalo, NY. The hatred and racism fomented by the xenophobic philosophy known as the "great replacement" theory are the direct causes of mass shootings which we all despise. We need the gift of the Holy Spirit in our efforts to eradicate such racial intolerance.

On a positive note, our "Advocate" has done another awesome job with this year's class of graduates. Congratulations to St. James' graduates on all levels of education! May you continue to love Jesus and the Father and to rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the decisions you make each day.

Peace,

Ben