

The Gospel today begins with a promise that answers one of the deepest fears in the human heart: **“I will not leave you orphans.”**

That is deliberate language.

Because an orphan is someone left alone,
unprotected,
without guidance,
without a place.

And that is exactly what the disciples are about to feel.

Christ is going to the Cross.
He will be taken from them.
Everything they have relied on will seem to collapse.

And into that moment, He says: You will not be left alone.

But immediately, the question presses in:

How?

Because He is leaving.

He will no longer walk with them as before.
They will not see Him, speak to Him, follow Him along the road.

So how can He say, “I will come to you”?

And this is where the Gospel opens something central:

**“I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,
to be with you forever.”**

The Holy Spirit.

Not for a moment. Not for certain times only. Forever.

Now that might still sound distant—until we look at the first reading.

Because there we see exactly what that means.

Philip goes to Samaria.

He preaches Christ.

And something happens immediately: **“There was great joy in that city.”**

That is not an emotional reaction.

It is the sign of something real.

Christ has arrived there. Not physically—but truly.

Through the preaching. Through the power of God at work.

Lives are changed.

Darkness is broken.

Something new begins.

But then something else happens.

Peter and John come down.

And what do they do?

They **lay hands** on the people.

And we are told: **“They received the Holy Spirit.”**

That is not symbolic language.

It is precise.

A visible action—hands laid upon them.

And an invisible reality—the Spirit given.

This is how Christ keeps His promise.

Not in a vague way.

Through something real.

Through the Church.

So now the words of Christ become clear: **“I will not leave you orphans.”**

He remains—through the Spirit,
given through the apostles,
handed on in the Church.

And immediately after that promise, Christ says:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

This is not a change of subject.

It follows directly.

Because to remain with Christ is not simply to feel something.

It is to live in communion with Him. And communion has a form. It has a shape.

It is lived.

Think of it simply.

If someone says they love you, but they never listen, never respond, never take you seriously—that is not love.

So Christ says: If you love me, you will live as I teach.

Then He goes further:

“You will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

That is the heart of everything.

Not a distant relationship. Not following from far away. But union.

Christ in you. You in Him. A real participation in His life.

Now St Peter speaks into that same reality.

He says: **“Always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you.”**

That assumes something very concrete.

That a Christian life is visible.

That it is different.

That people notice it.

Why would they notice?

Because of hope.

Not surface positivity.

Something deeper.

Something steady.

Think of it like this.

Two people face the same difficulty.

The same pressure.

The same uncertainty.

One becomes anxious, unstable, reactive.

The other is not untouched—but there is something different.

A steadiness.

A refusal to collapse.

A sense that this is not the end.

That is what Peter means.

Hope.

And when people see that, they ask: Why?

And Peter says: Be ready to answer.

Not with aggression.

Not with arguments first.

But with clarity.

“With gentleness and reverence.”

Because the truth is not ours to force.

It is Christ’s to reveal.

And then Peter says something that brings everything back to reality:

“It is better to suffer for doing good...than for doing evil.”

So the Gospel is not softened.

Christ remains present—but the Cross is still there.

The difference is this: It is no longer empty. It is lived with Him.

Put the readings together:

Christ promises: I will not leave you.

Acts shows: He has not left.

He is present—through the Spirit, given in the Church.

Peter shows: And when that presence is real in a life,
it produces something visible: Hope.

And Christ does not remain in a vague or private way.

He remains **concretely**.

Through the Spirit.

Through the apostles.

Through what is handed on.

Through the sacraments.

Which is why Sunday is not just a gathering.

It is the place where this promise is fulfilled again.

“I will come to you.” In the Eucharist. Not remembered. Not imagined. Given.

Think of the difference.

If Christ were only remembered—then faith would depend on memory.

If Christ were only an idea—then faith would depend on thought.

But if Christ is present—then faith becomes an encounter.

And that is what happens at Mass. Christ gives Himself.

The same Lord who spoke these words—“I will not leave you orphans”—

is present. And gives His life.

So everything comes to a point.

Do you live as though Christ is present—or as though He is gone?

If He is gone—then faith becomes occasional.

Obedience becomes negotiable. The Church becomes something optional.

But if He is present—everything gathers around Him.

You return. You remain. You receive.

And then slowly—something appears. Not dramatically. But unmistakably.

Hope.

A life that does not collapse when things go wrong.

A quiet certainty that Christ is here.

“I will not leave you orphans.”

That is the promise. And it is fulfilled—

in the Spirit,
in the Church,
in the sacraments,
in the lives of those who remain in Him.

And through that—Christ is not distant.

He is present.

And His presence
begins to shape a life
from within—

until it is ready
for the place
He has prepared.