

## May 14, 2023: Sixth Sunday of Easter

**Main Idea:** God promises us the richness of a salvation full of middle spaces—and then gives us an Advocate to help navigate those middle spaces.

Before Jesus ascends into heaven, he promises his disciples an Advocate who will be with them forever—indeed, an Advocate who already abides in them and who they already know. Jesus assures the disciples that, through listening to that Advocate and keeping God’s commandments, they will remain connected with him. This promise tells us something very important about the salvation God has in mind for us. Salvation is not just about the moment of resurrection. Jesus could have taken the disciples to heaven with him immediately or planned his return to earth and final judgment within a few short hours or days. If salvation were just about the switch from death to life, Jesus could have been much more efficient with his earthly exit.

Because Jesus is so intentional in preparing the disciples to live and keep practicing their faith without him in their communities, we can assume that he views salvation as something significantly richer and more expansive than the ending and beginning markers of a life. We can assume that he views salvation as something that entails a lot of life in the middle, that he views loving each other well every day in all our minutia as a holy endeavor.

How much more exciting and meaningful is a salvation full of middle spaces than a salvation that’s limited to resurrection? So much more exciting. So much more meaningful. But it’s also so much more challenging! It requires patience and tolerance of ambiguity; it requires constant remembering and practicing; it seems like a kind of constant learning curve.

Jesus knows this, which is why he doesn’t ask us or expect us to navigate those middle spaces by ourselves. Our good news today is that Jesus gifts us the richest possible form of salvation while also providing us with a plan and some resources to figure it out along the way.

### Scripture Summary

The disciples feared for a day when Jesus might no longer walk with them. Never fear. Jesus promised an Advocate to remain with them forever.



# GOD'S WORD for Today

May 14, 2023  
Sixth Sunday of Easter

## First Reading: Acts 17:22-31

<sup>22</sup>Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. <sup>23</sup>For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup>The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, <sup>25</sup>nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. <sup>26</sup>From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, <sup>27</sup>so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup>For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ <sup>29</sup>Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. <sup>30</sup>While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, <sup>31</sup>because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

## Psalm: Psalm 66:8-20

## Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22

<sup>13</sup>Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, <sup>15</sup>but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; <sup>16</sup>yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. <sup>17</sup>For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil. <sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

## Gospel: John 14:15-21

<sup>15</sup>“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup>And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. <sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup>In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup>On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup>They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”