

If You Love Me...

The Advocate Is Alive, Well and Working

Intro. “If you love me, you will” fill in the blank. We sometimes use these words to convince a friend or family member to do something for us that they are not sure they want to do. We use the words to make them feel guilty or to control them or as a phony test of love. “If you really love me you will get me the new phone.” “If you love me, you will go to the restaurant *I* like.” That is not a good position to put family or friends in. If they say no, it is tantamount to saying they don’t love us. It is an unfair and unloving thing to do.

I. The Lord did not use these words in any of those senses. He said them, **not** to *coerce* us, *force* us into following the Commandments, but as a statement of

fact. When we are in a relationship of love or friendship, the usual tendency is to treat the other with respect and courtesy. That means we *value* what he or she says and thinks. It doesn’t mean we have to agree all the time. By our words, and more by our actions we show our love for our friends. If we love the Lord, then we *listen* to what he says and try to walk in his way.

During the *first* three weeks of the Easter season, we read how the disciples reacted to incredible news of the Lord’s resurrection. The *last* three weeks we return to the farewell dinner as the Lord said goodbye to his friends. He promised not to leave them orphans, that is, not to *abandon* them. He talked about supporting them by sending an advocate for them; someone who watch over and guide them in his absence. As we get closer to his Ascension

into heaven next week and Pentecost in two weeks, we hear more about this promise. This gift will help them to stay strong in their relationship when he returned to heaven. In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear about an example of how the Holy Spirit was present in their work of spreading the good news of salvation.

Concl. Keeping in touch with someone who moves away is difficult. A few years ago one of my best friends took a job in Massachusetts. This was before cell phones were prolific and neither of us are good letter writers. I almost let the friendship die. I had to decide if the friendship was important to me, then I had to maintain it with regular phone calls or letters. After twenty-five years even though we don't see each a lot, we are still friends. To maintain a relationship with the Lord takes work also. We

communicate not through any of the "chats" or grams, but through prayer, scripture, and the sacraments. If we value a relationship with the Lord it is important we make time for him. Listen to the nudges and inspiration of the Advocate to do the works of God, like food pantry, Way Clinic or other community service. This is the presence of the Advocate the Lord sends to guide us each day.

