



May 14, 2023  
**Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
**Mothers' Day**

*"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." John 14:18*



Dear Friends,

Twenty-one years ago, when my mother died, a friend wrote me a kind note. She said the most difficult loss is that of our mother. It is difficult because our first experience of God is that of mother. In the womb we are enveloped and nourished by the direct physical connection to her life. That bond continues after we are born. We are sustained at her breast.

It should be no surprise the first images of the divine that appear about five thousand years ago are female figures. It is the divine mother who gives birth to all of existence. This is an image of communion. Today we celebrate our mothers who by their lives give us an image of God.

At the heart of the Gospel of John is Jesus' commandment of love. The God that Jesus reveals is shown to us by love. The love of which the gospel speaks is divine love, in Greek 'agape.' Agapic love is freely given, always present, life-giving, faithful, forgiving, healing; it is all-merciful, and kind. The Spirit of Divine Love joins us with Godself and all creation.

Today's reading from John comes from the scene of the Last Supper. Jesus is giving his final instructions to his disciples. In this passage Jesus is responding to Philip's request, *"Show us the Father."* Jesus assures them that he is the loving face of the Father. The actions of Jesus of healing, forgiving sin, and proclaiming God's merciful justice are how we recognize God working in him. God is a loving relationship that is open to all who love Jesus.

There is a saying that, *"God is more a verb than a noun."* What that means is if God is just a noun than God can be treated as something that is separate and far away. But if God is a verb, then he will be found in the actions we do. This is what Jesus is saying when he says, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* We must act the way Jesus did. A Franciscan friend of mine told me about a friar in his community who preached a famous homily. The friar read the Gospel passage. He began the homily, *"You have heard it, now go do it."* Then he sat down.

The invitation of Jesus is not to holy ideas or thoughts. He invites us to act mercifully like God. He does not abandon us to our own devices. He promises the faith community the gift of the Spirit who will help us and guide us. He will leave so that he can send the Spirit. The Spirit of God at work in Jesus is given them, and us, in the resurrection. The forces of evil neither see nor know the Spirit. We can expect that there will be those who will reject us. But disciples know the Spirit because they see the Risen One at work in their actions of loving-kindness. Where love is there God is found.

Last week, this week, and the next two weeks we are celebrating First Holy Communion with our children. The word communion expresses our faith that the Spirit of the Risen Jesus unites us and all creation in the Divine love. May our children come to know God who loves us like a loving mother and a compassionate father.

Christ is risen!

*Fr Ron*

*Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: [www.anne.church](http://www.anne.church)*