

Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:

John 14:15-21

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Year A - Easter 6, Text: John 14:15-21
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As part of his larger “Farewell Discourses” in John 14:1c–16:33, Jesus tells the disciples that he will send the Holy Spirit (14:16, 26).

The Spirit is not a freelancer, working on His own. The Holy Spirit is as much the Spirit of Jesus as He is the Spirit of the Father (see 1 Corinthians 3:17–18). Everything that the Spirit does points to Jesus and His glory. The Spirit of truth leads to Jesus who is the truth (14:6, 17). This is the chain of authority: The Father assigns to the Son His servant task and saving mission, and the Son tells the Spirit what to speak on His behalf. Any claim to possess the Spirit which does not glorify and reflect Jesus is a fake claim (see 1 Corinthians 12:3 and 1 John 4:1–3).

John 14:15–31 focuses on the promise of the Holy Spirit. Note again the introductory comments made above in relation to the role of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 14:15: Once again, Jesus links commandments to love. It is important to understand that love is not merely about emotions and feelings. It has to do with caring, compassionate servanthood. Faith in Jesus reveals itself in never-ending service to others — without concern for borders, flags, or skin color.

Verse 14:16: This verse contains the first reference in John to the Holy Spirit as Advocate or Paraclete. The Greek term derives from legal terminology for an advocate or defense attorney, and it can mean spokesperson, mediator, intercessor, comforter, counselor, consoler, helper — although none of these terms reflects fully the meaning in John.

In 1 John 2:1, Jesus is referred to as the first Advocate in that He intercedes for His people before the presence of His Father in heaven. John 14:16 describes the second Advocate, the Holy Spirit, as a witness to Jesus and a prosecutor of the world. The Holy Spirit represents the continuing presence on earth of the Jesus who has returned to the Father. The Holy Spirit uses the Written Word and the Sacraments to continue to

make known God’s truth about the Living Word, Jesus the Messiah.

Verse 14:17: The Spirit will continue to abide with God’s people after Jesus withdraws His visible presence from among them. The term “the spirit of truth” was also used in the Dead Sea scrolls found at Qumran to refer to a moral force put into a person by God, as opposed to the spirit of perversity.

Verses 14:18–21: In v. 18, Jesus says that He will not withdraw His presence from His own and leave them to live as orphans; He will come to dwell within and among them. (Here, the reference is not to His coming *parousia*, His final re-appearing, at the end of history.) Jesus’ brothers and sisters will continue in faith to “see” Jesus in their hearts, even though they will not see Him with their eyes. The message of v. 20 is profound: Jesus will be in the Father, and His brothers and sisters will be in Him as He will be in them. Indeed, a divine relationship! In v. 21, Jesus once again points out that love (servanthood) is the mark of discipleship. Worth pondering is the following statement by H.G. Wells:

The doctrine of the Kingdom God, which was the main teaching of Jesus, and which plays so small a part in the Christian creeds, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought.

