**6th SUNDAY OF EASTER [25th May, 2014]**

READINGS: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17/ 1Peter 3:15-18/ John 14: 15-21

THEME: THE PROMISED PARACLETE

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

It is a common practice in Ghana (and elsewhere) for parents travelling for a while to leave their children in the care of latter’s grandparents, uncles, aunties, older cousins, etc. Similarly Jesus, about to leave His disciples, assured them: “**I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete [the Holy Spirit] to be with you forever**” (John 14:16-17).

Parents leave their children with their grandparents, uncles, aunties, etc. because they trust that the latter will take good care of the children (as much as the parents do). In other words, these relatives became like parents to the children. Similarly, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as “**another**” Paraclete. That is, the Holy Spirit would take care of the disciples as Jesus did for them. Whatever Jesus as the “**first**” Paraclete did for the disciples, the Holy Spirit (as “another” Paraclete) would do for them. What then is the meaning of the word, “Paraclete”?

PARACLETE:

The word “Paraclete” is a transliteration of the Greek word, ‘parakletos’ which has several meanings: it was used to refer to one’s advocate/lawyer, consoler/comforter or counselor.

ADVOCATE: As their advocate, Jesus defended His disciples whenever the Pharisees accused them. Similarly, as our advocate, the Holy Spirit is on our side and speaks on our behalf. Thus, St. Paul writes: ‘the Spirit helps us in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered’(Rom. 8:27). Secondly as our advocate, the Holy Spirit protects us from evil spirits. The safety of our souls is absolutely assured in the Holy Spirit, because no spirit can withstand the Spirit of God!

COMFORTER: As a lawyer would do for a discouraged client (accused of a serious crime), so Jesus often encouraged or comforted His disciples. For instance, last Sunday we read His encouraging words to His disciples: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God and trust in me” (John 14:1). Similarly, the Holy Spirit comforts us when we experience the difficulties of life; He encourages us to persevere in our lives. So let us call upon Him in difficult times.

COUNSELOR: As a lawyer may counsel his/her client (regarding what to say at the court hearing), so Jesus often counselled His disciples through His teachings. Similarly, the Holy Spirit counsels us in many ways:

* When we have to answer for our Christian faith (*cf*. second reading). Remember what Jesus said about the counselling of the Holy Spirit: ‘When they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, what you should say. For the **Holy Spirit** will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say’ (Luke 12:11-12).
* Secondly, when we have to discern and make a good decision. For instance, on the question about whether gentile male converts should be circumcised or not, the apostles declared that the Holy Spirit inspired their discernment and decision (Acts 15: 28). Similarly, if through prayer and obedience to the Holy Spirit, we remain in constant touch with him, He will guide us with divine wisdom in the choices or decisions we have to make in our daily lives.

CONCLUSION:

Through our participation in the nine days of prayers [Pentecost Novena] beginning on the Ascension Day, may we begin to experience more the Holy Spirit as our Paraclete:

* May we experience more His advocacy in our prayers and in our fight against evil, amen!
* May we experience more his encouragement and strength in difficult and challenging times, amen!
* And may more of His counsels abound in our lives, especially in our important decision-making moments, amen!