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Among the few quotes I remember from Martin Luther is, *God has given us a whole sea full of His word. One commentator remarked in reply, but we never venture out into its immensities; and so never discover the wide new lands that lie waiting for us, that might be ours, and should be ours, and are meant to be ours; but putter to and fro about the inland waters of the faith, never feel the rush and heave and irresistibility of the whole gospel, with its far horizons that keep receding as we make for them, luring us on and on.* This sentiment is found in the great Renaissance painter, Tintoretto who throwing down his brushes exclaimed in despair, *the sea grows always greater, nobody can paint it!*^[1] We may only wonder if St. Peter had some sense of this when He saw the risen Lord walking on the seashore, and not waiting for the boat to come ashore, jumped out of his fishing boat, and swam to meet Christ.

We may think this morning that if only we had walked and talked with Christ while He physically walked on this earth, then we too could have the great and fervent faith of St. Peter and the faithful disciples and follow them in their great acts of faith. If only we could see, hear, feel, and touch for ourselves, then we might be drawn to dive into the immense and wondrous truths of God. Instead, we must rely purely on faith, trusting in His words, blessed are they who believe without seeing, or as we hear this morning, *I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away. It must have seemed startling to the disciples to be told that it was better for them if Jesus went away.* Indeed, it must seem startling to us, too, until we think about it carefully. We think it would be wonderful if Jesus was here with us in the flesh, maybe then our lives would be transformed, maybe then we would finally experience that peace we long for. But the truth is that not many of us could bear such a meeting or encounter as our hearts are being prepared to meet Jesus face to face. If at this very moment we were granted such a meeting, we might be surprised that many of us would react to Him as so many did during His Earthly Visitation. The Gospels are full of these encounters when they tried to stone Jesus or when Jesus' followers walked away from Him because His teaching was too hard to hear, and too hard to follow. Jesus is not easy to accept, follow, or abide for too very long without transformation in our own hearts and souls. And yet Jesus comes to seek us out, He comes to transform us, to make us into what He has always intended. The question is if we are ready to accept His arrival? Are we ready to be drawn out into the deeper water, or to remain in the shallows.

Jesus promises His disciples and each one of us that He will come to us and remain with us. Yet, His coming and abiding will be experienced in a way that is somewhat different from His Earthly Visitation in the flesh. This is what our lessons point us to this morning, to ready ourselves for the Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Jesus promises to pour out the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, out on the world, who will glorify Jesus Christ and God the Father, who will teach us all what we must learn, and prepare us to one day meet Jesus face to face. The Holy Spirit whom our Lord sends to us is everywhere, wherever *two or three are gathered together in his name*. We do not just run into the Holy Spirit at Mass, or whenever we come through the church doors. He is with us always: at work, at school, even in the privacy of our own homes. It is only through the agency of the Holy Spirit that our Lord could make good his promise to be with his Church always, *even unto the end of the world*. Jesus says, *it is expedient for you that I go away*, so that He can be with all men, in all places, and in all times. And this is the truth, that regardless of our dispositions or our sins, Jesus is with us for all time, even until His Second Coming and the end of the world.

Yet, how often do we say to ourselves, this is all fine and good for the Disciples, and those saints from a long time ago, and for our Bishops, priests and deacons? But surely, Jesus does not mean all of us. The lesson for this Sunday is simple: that same Holy Spirit which descended on the Disciples at Pentecost descends upon each one of us in Baptism and Confirmation. We must prepare our hearts to better receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit. We hear today in the Collect, Epistle and Gospel that it is only with God's assistance, only by his grace, that such a preparation is possible. Thus, the Collect addresses God as the One Who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. The Epistle recognizes that *every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights*. Those gifts include his Son whom St. James calls the Word of truth, the holiness which comes through the Son, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift is possible, the Gospel makes clear, because Jesus "goes away" to heaven, and presents himself to the Father, who in turn gives all things to the Son, including this Gift of the Holy Spirit, which He will breathe into the hearts of all believers.

When Jesus says, *I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now*, that includes us too. Our Lord Jesus Christ longs to send the Holy Spirit into our hearts and souls. He longs to have a relationship with us inwardly and spiritually. He wants to show us who we are, where we have failed, where we need improvement, how we must confess and how we must embrace spiritual mourning.

He longs to lead us from sin into holiness, from death to life, from the old ways to the new ways that lead to His Kingdom. We must open our hearts to Jesus' intention and desire to enter them. The Holy Spirit has not passed any of us over, unless the doors of our hearts are locked. Unless our hearts are blocked and clogged with sin. We of all people, as confessing and practicing Christians, have no excuse to not be transformed by the Holy Spirit. We have received the Holy Spirit at our Baptisms and the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been unwrapped for us at our Confirmations. We have been invited to the Altar of the Lord every Sunday to receive His own body and blood, to receive Jesus veiled in bread and wine which the Holy Spirit has been called down upon.

Jesus intends to come to us always. Jesus intends to come to us wherever we are and in whatever condition we find ourselves. It is why He died and rose from the dead. It is why He has ascended back to the Father. Jesus longs to come to us, to dwell in us, and to transform and redeem us inwardly and mystically through the indwelling of our Lord the Holy Spirit. Are we ready for this relationship? This is the whole point and reason for Jesus' coming to us in the first place. Will we let Him come into our souls? Will we allow Him to draw us out into the deeper water of His Word? If so, then when He comes to us through bread and wine, through the tangible and the physical once again, His Body will give us new Life and His Blood will give us new joy. Amen.