

# “Discover Your True Self”

June 14:15-21& Acts 17:22-29

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May 17, 2020

**Prayer for Understanding** Loving God fill us with your Spirit, your breath, your abundant life. Open our eyes to beauty, our ears to harmony, our hearts to love our minds to wisdom and our souls to joy. Speak to us through your love letter to us the Bible and through one another. Amen

The Holy Spirit is your personal Comforter, Advocate, Revealer and Uniter who guides you on your journey to discover your true self. You are God’s precious, unique, talented, gifted, creative, marvelous, child.

Our scripture reading is the continuation of last week’s passage from Jesus farewell discourse to his disciples on the night before his earthly death. Last week we explored how Jesus is the way of grace transforming us and the cosmos’ today and that will resurrect us and the cosmos.

Jesus said. **John 14:15-21 NRSV “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask God, and God will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees the Holy Spirit nor knows the Holy Spirit. You know the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit abides with you, and the Holy Spirit will be in you. “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in God, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by God, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”**

For three years Jesus has been the disciples’ friend, guide, counselor, teacher, sustainer, comforter, advocate, revealer and uniter. God never abandons anyone. No one is ever lost to God. God never leaves anyone orphaned. The Holy Spirit is always with us and within us.

The Holy Spirit is our comforter. Jesus knows the disciples will soon be grieving the loss of their friend, God in human flesh. All of us grieve the loss of the people we love. Sometimes knowing that no one is ever lost, knowing that God resurrects everyone, knowing that we will be with everyone we love for eternity in heaven provides little comfort when we are unable to hug that person today and physically laugh with them today. Love completes us. Love makes us whole. Every person is a facet of the image of God. When someone we love is not physically with us, we are incomplete. The Holy Spirit is our comforter who feels our pain, fills our memory with loving times with those we love and over time gives us hope and peace. Often when someone goes home to heaven we are shaken, concerned about the future. How will I proceed without the physical presence of the one I love? How can we love like that person loves? The disciples were afraid that they would not be able to love like Jesus loves. The Holy Spirit is our comforter who wipes away our tears, sustains us and completes us with their love. We are never orphaned. We are never alone. We are never without the love of the resurrected for the Holy Spirit is within them and the Holy Spirit is within us, therefore we are all one in love.

The Holy Spirit comforts us every time we experience a loss of any type; lost health, lost job, lost fellowship, lost entertainment, lost dining at a restaurant, lost sport, lost dream. One of the joys of heaven is having all of our losses resurrected. Until then the Holy Spirit comforts us.

The Holy Spirit is our Advocate. Jesus promises I will not leave you orphaned. I will not leave you grieving. I will not leave you desolate. I will not leave you abandoned. I will not leave you rejected. I will not leave you crushed by your own negative thoughts. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, that other voice in our mind, telling you that you are wonderfully created, gifted, talented, a partner with God in transforming your self and the cosmos into pure glory. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, that other feeling in our heart, feeling beloved, feeling peace and joy, feeling the supremacy of your love intertwined with God’s love that expands joyful love forever. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate that other essence in our soul, our true self, unrestricted by anything, free, complete, whole, shalom.

The Holy Spirit is our Advocate that guides us away from all that diminishes life to all that enhances life. In the book *Immortal Diamond* Richard Rohr talks about how our ego, that is our false self, distracts us. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate helps us discover our true self. Richard likens our true self to a diamond, buried deep within us, formed under the intense pressure of our life, that the Advocate helps us uncover and separate from all the clutter of our ego. In a sense God transforms and resurrects us through our true self. Bishop Jake Owensby said. “We are our true selves when we live into our essence. We were created in the image of God. So, to be our true selves is to love what God loves, how God loves it.” Our Advocate guides our journey as we become pure grace, joy and peace.

Being orphaned, alienation, rejection, abandonment is a major theme in psychology, literature and in Greek and Roman mythology. Sometimes one tries to fill our void with idols. An idol is anything that we trust more than God. An idol is anything that we use in place of God to escape, comfort or soothe us. The Apostle Paul noticed how the Greeks were replacing God with all sorts of human made gods. **Acts 17:22-29 MSG “So Paul took his stand in the open space at the Areopagus and laid it out for them. “It is plain to see that you Athenians take your religion seriously. When I arrived here the other day, I was fascinated with all the shrines I came across. And then I found one inscribed, to the god nobody knows. I’m here to introduce you to this God so you can worship intelligently, know who you are dealing with. “The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, does not live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for God, as if God could not take care of Godself. God makes the creatures; the creatures do not make God. Starting from scratch, God made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find God. God does not play hide-and-seek with us. God is not remote; God is near. We live and move in God, cannot get away from God! One of your poets said it well: ‘We are the God-created.’ Well, if we are the God-created, it doesn’t make a lot of sense to think we could hire a sculptor to chisel a god out of stone for us, does it.”**

The Holy Spirit is our Advocate who empowers us with forgiveness, setting us free from fear, hate, confusion, anxiety, brokenness, idols, sin to joyful love, to discover the glorious true self within us and within everyone. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate who empowers to let go of our regret, guilt and shame to discover our glorious true self.

The Holy Spirit is our Revealer who grows our sense of God’s goodness, peace, love, joy and grace. The Holy Spirit is our Revealer who enables us to perceive the goodness, creativity, love and joy within our self. God created you unique. God created you to love, rejoice and bring grandeur to the cosmos. The Holy Spirit reveals God to you. The Holy Spirit reveals your true self to you. At times we are in a fog unable to see our way, the Holy Spirit is wind that clears the fog. At times we are in the dark unable find our way, the Holy Spirit is light that shows us the way. At times we are bombarded with competing thoughts, the Holy Spirit is clarity. At times we are overwhelmed with emotions the Holy Spirit is pure joyful love. At times we ache, the Holy Spirit is vigor. At times we are in turmoil the Holy Spirit is peace. The Holy Spirit, our Revealer, ever expands our love and joy.

The Holy Spirit is our Uniter forever uniting us with God, uniting us with all people, uniting us with the cosmos, uniting us with our true self. We celebrate our unity in the sacraments, holy communion and baptism. All living things are nourished by God. Whenever we eat, or drink, we are celebrating our unity with God and our unity with all life. In baptism we celebrate that all of creation is our kin. Baptism celebrates that you are a cherished member of God’s family, you belong, you have purpose, you have meaning, you have infinite value, you complete God’s family. The Holy Spirit is our Uniter transforming us into harmony with all. The Holy Spirit is our Uniter filling us with empathy, compassion, forgiveness, encouragement and generosity. The Holy Spirit is our Uniter who gives us grace eyes to see beyond the faults, blemishes, mistakes and ugliness in another, to see their true self, to see their unique goodness, love and joy. The Holy Spirit is our Uniter who does not let us leave anyone an orphan, does not let us give up on anyone. The Holy Spirit, our Uniter, bring us all together in splendid harmony.

In 1940 the Holy Spirit gave a teenager the courage to go to the session and request baptism for her child. She came an orphan. When the father found out she was pregnant he abandoned her. When her parents found out that she was having a child, her family disowned her. She came alone, trembling, afraid, crying. At that time and place her situation raised eyebrows and was controversial enough that the session discussed the appropriateness of the whole matter before approving, which they did. In that church it was tradition that the biological family stood with the couple seeking baptism for their child. Usually there were grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins all united together. The real problem, everybody knew, was when the reverend got to the part when the whole family stands up, there was not going to be any family, it would only be the orphaned mother, all alone, her situation would be seen by everyone. The reverend spoke with compassionate empathy that church’s traditional words, “The family presenting their child for baptism please come forward.” Down the aisle came the mother nervously, shaking slightly, with her month-old son in her arms. The scene hurt all right, every bit as much as they knew it would. Suddenly the mother’s childhood Sunday school teacher hurried forward and hugged her and stood beside her. Then a young couple raced forward to stand with her. Next the entire session came forward to stand with her. Within moments the entire church left their pews and squeezed in tight around the mother and her newborn son. When the reverend asked the parent’s questions the entire church answered.

I will not leave you orphaned; Jesus promised. God has chosen you and adopted you. You are a beloved, cherished member of God’s family. You are a child of God. You will belong to God’s family forever. See what love God has for all people that we are called children of God. Amen

