

# Reflections on the Gospel

## 'AT HOME' WITH GOD

In last week's Gospel Jesus reflected on two understandings of his 'going away' and 'return': first, his going away in death and his re-appearance three days later as risen Lord; second, his more final departure to the Father, to return only at the end of time. The section from Jesus' instruction that we hear today focuses upon that second, much longer period of absence.

As far as the non-believing world is concerned, Jesus will simply have ceased to exist. Believers, however, will continue to 'see' him with the eyes of faith and experience his presence in this way.

In loving him and keeping his commandments, they will participate in the mutual love that unites Father and Son, both of whom will 'make their home' within them. Though deprived of Jesus' physical presence, they and God will be mutually 'at home' in this sense.

In this connection Jesus speaks of 'another Paraclete' whom he will ask the Father to give. A 'paraclete' is someone who stands beside a person in time of difficulty, a supportive and encouraging presence. We might think, for example, of a highly respected person whom we might ask to go to court with us to act as a character witness. Though Jesus will no longer be physically present to carry out this role, the community will have 'another paraclete' in the shape of the Holy Spirit.

In the face of the world's hostility and doubt, the 'Spirit of truth' will offer reassurance that what they believe and seek to live by is the most profound truth.