

## Prayers & Reflection for May

### **Text for Meditation** John 14:21-26

Jesus said to his disciples:

‘Anybody who receives my commandments and keeps them will be one who loves me; and anybody who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and show myself to him.’

Judas – this was not Judas Iscariot – said to him, ‘Lord, what is all this about? Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?’ Jesus replied:

‘If anyone loves me he will keep my word,  
and my Father will love him,  
and we shall come to him  
and make our home with him.  
Those who do not love me do not keep my words.  
And my word is not my own:  
it is the word of the one who sent me.  
I have said these things to you while still with you;  
but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father will send in my name will teach you everything  
and remind you of all I have said to you.’

### **Responsorial Psalm** Ps 97:1-4. (R) v.3

**Response** “All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.”

1. Sing a new song to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation. **(R)**
2. The Lord has made known his salvation:  
has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love  
for the house of Israel. **(R)**
3. All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your joy. **(R)**

### **Concluding Prayer**

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy. (Saint Augustine)

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“Love” in the Johannine writings is a fundamental concept that is not well reflected in the word as used in the English language. “Love” for the writer of John’s gospel implies self-sacrifice and altruism. It contrasts with self-interested love and it is shown through actions and not through words only. “If anyone loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him”.

For this writer the world is divided into two self-excluding groups: believers and non-believers. Judas or Jude? echoed this in his question “Do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” In John the presence of the Spirit and the nature of Jesus are known only to believers.

This raises important questions for us today as to how we discern the presence of the Holy Spirit as promised by Jesus in the last lines of this section. However this knowledge is not known simply by the intellect but through the heart - through love. For John faith is rooted in our whole being. The love we have for members of our family is not an intellectual response to a moral duty rather it is an emotional response that often overrides prudential arguments to the contrary similar to the love of a parent for a wayward child as exemplified in Luke’s parable of the forgiving father.

The psalm celebrates God’s acts of salvation in the history of Israel but where do we find these today in our world of conflict and suffering? Where indeed was it for the people of Israel in exile in Babylon? or for the Jews in the concentration camps? Love of God requires an act of faith that does not go against reason but transcends reason. As Saint Paul says we are fools for Christ (1Cor 4:10). How do our current lives echo this foolishness?

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