



Jesus said to his disciples: "When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. I have told you this so that you may not fall away. They will expel you from the synagogues; in fact, the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me. I have told you this so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, as I begin this prayer I offer you my whole self: my thoughts, desires, decisions, actions, hopes, fears, weaknesses, failures and petty successes. I open my entire being to you, aware that you know everything already. I'm certain of your mercy and of the purifying power of your penetrating, loving gaze.

Petition: Lord God, help me to live as a true witness to Christ.

1. Witness of Christ: Some people try to invoke the Holy Spirit as justification for ideas contrary to Christ's teaching. A careful look at today's Gospel illustrates how this can never be according to God's plan. The Holy Spirit is not at odds with Christ's message, nor is he working out a plan of salvation distinct from Christ's Church. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of Christ and of the Father; his very purpose in coming is to testify to Christ. Every true inspiration of the Holy Spirit moves us to a greater fidelity to the truth. Am I attentive to the Spirit's urging me to a greater fidelity to my Christian commitments?

2. Witnesses in the Spirit: Our faith is by no means a static reality. Just as the first

disciples experienced Christ's preaching, miracles and personal love, all Christians serious about their faith discover Christ's presence throughout their daily experience. This is especially true in the sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. Jesus is always with us, and his forgiveness and closeness are the source of our joy. The Holy Spirit empowers us through the grace of our baptism to give witness to what we have freely received. Do I take seriously my Christian vocation to give testimony to Christ's love? Do I realize that my first act of testimony needs to be the witness of a truly Christian life? Do I remember that in this seemingly daunting task I should rely heavily on the Holy Spirit as my business partner?

3. Fidelity Amidst Opposition: Christ shares with the apostles gathered in the Upper Room that being witnesses to him will not always be met with acceptance. Opposition seems to be an integral part of being a Christian. Deep-seated and unflinching adherence to Christ and the voice of conscience has never been compatible with the popular mindset. In fact, many times Christians are not called to "fit in" but to "stand out", and this has inevitable consequences as it did in the life of Our Lord. The wonderful part is that we have been promised the final victory. Christ goes before us and the Holy Spirit is at our side.

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, it has always been demanding to be an authentic witness to you. Teach me not to rely on my own capabilities, but to grow in strength and coherence through fidelity to the inspirations of your Holy Spirit.

Resolution: I will make some public sign of witness to my faith today.