7 C Easter 2025

 *“Jesus prayed saying, Holy Father, I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in Me and I in You.”*

 The context of this prayer is Jesus’ final supper, and His extended last will and testament. This prayer stretches into the future. He includes us. A chain is envisioned, and the links of the chain is the word about Jesus. It’s more than information. The prayer is the expression and communication of their interior relationship with Jesus. This word becomes the seed in the heart of others to enter into the same relationship.

 St John conveys many meanings associated with the death of Jesus. On one level, death signifies physical loss, grief and confusion of His followers; weeping Magdalene’s of this sorrow.

 Another level, Jesus’ death is seen as a departure, His leaving this world to go the Father, a transitional event in the providential plan of God. On still another level, His death is the full revelation of the glory of the Father, and the full communication of this glory to His friends. In death, the eternal life that is the inner being of Jesus meets and transcends the limits of temporal life.

 And still, another level of meaning. This loss of Jesus’ physical presence through death unfolds into a new interior, spiritual presence. This spiritual presence is the essence of Jesus’ incarnate life. Jesus was always the Word made flesh. But now that the flesh has faded, the spiritual presence continues among His friends in a profoundly intimate way. This is what I wish to explore—this spiritual presence—the indwelling of the Father and the Son, creating community who love one another, and inviting an alienated world into this experience of oneness.

 Spiritual presence is one of the consolations that faith offers for physical loss. We often turn to it when someone we love has died. In the face of Jesus’ upcoming death, He articulates a spiritual indwelling that is not broken by power of death.

 We must realize the center of our being is a spiritual reality, dependent upon God and filling our emptiness from within and encouraging us to share life with others. When this spiritual life is shared, there is more life. It multiplies and magnifies. *Cor loquitur cor*—heart speaks to heart. Our spiritual presence to others lessens their aloneness and increases their openness to God. This accompaniment furthers the realization of the love God has for us.

 The receiving and giving among the friends of Jesus creates a unity that becomes a message to the non-unified world, a world that lives by taking and holding. From where does this love come? Is not the source of this unity God? St Francis discovered that this way of being human could only be because God is the ultimate Source, the Good, all Good, supreme Good.

 Jesus sees His friends as God’s gift. This insight is reminiscent of what John the Baptist tells his disciples when they complain that people are flocking to Jesus, *“No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven.”* Friends are gifts from heaven. These God-given companions are with Jesus always. If we are God’s gifts, we should be ever-present as God. We are with Jesus now at supper. After His physical death, we will be with Jesus through the conferral of His and the Father’s Spirit. After our physical death, should we not join Jesus in the house of the Father? In the house of many rooms?

 In the Paschal Mystery we have seen this divine glory in and through Jesus’ physical flesh. Why should we not see the Word in its eternal form, the Word that left His clothes behind in the tomb as He returned to the Father? Jesus now wears the garments of the world. He brings together God’s love and God’s friends. We are united because Jesus does this. He does not disappear. He remains in His friends as the everlasting bond of meeting. Jesus is the invitation to the disconnected world. The path to this unity is Jesus’ spiritual presence.

