FR. GARY'S CORNER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The setting for today's Gospel passage was the Last Supper. Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure, and He promised that He would send the Holy Spirit as an Advocate, the Spirit of truth. He also emphasizes that loving God means having and observing His commandments.

Both the first and second readings also extol obedience to the Lord's commands. Obedience is sometimes a word that makes those of us raised in the U.S. a bit uneasy. Afterall, our nation was founded by rebelling against a king. Our exaltation of freedom as a value can sometimes seem at odds with obedience. But obedience, as hard as it might be sometimes, is essential to the spiritual life.

In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Philip the deacon is being obedient to the Lord's command to "go and make disciples of all nations." Philip is known as Philip "the evangelist" because scriptures portray him as zealous about spreading the Good News of Jesus.

In the second reading from the first Letter of Peter, we hear the exhortation to "always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for the reason for your hope…." Here again, we see an invitation to be obedient to the Lord's command to spread the Gospel, to evangelize.

Later in that same reading we hear St. Peter say, "it is better to suffer for doing good, if that be the will of God, than for doing evil." Again, he affirms the importance of obedience to the will of God, even if suffering results.

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Yes, true love, it seems, demands obedience.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life,