

A helper, to be with you always

Peter's face was reddened with the flush of wine. It darkened further as his frustrations festered. Jesus was leaving them and this was their final meal together. It was all over! Suddenly, everything was going wrong. And worse, Peter had been accused of unfaithfulness.

Peter took another swallow of his wine and pondered how he could ever deny this Jesus whom he had followed all over Galilee and Samaria for the last three years.

Unable to contain his wrath, Peter blurted out: "I don't get it! What are we supposed to do if you leave us?"

Jesus leaned over and put his hand on Peter's back. In loving, patient words, Jesus explained: "If you love me and obey the commands I give you, I will ask the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you always..."

Peter thought Jesus was announcing someone new. Another Messiah?

Jesus continued: "...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, since it neither sees him nor recognizes him, but you can recognize him because he remains with you and will be within you."

Peter felt a rush of anger. "No! We don't want another Spirit. You're abandoning us like orphans," he charged.

Jesus gave reassurance, "I will not leave you orphaned, I will come back to you."

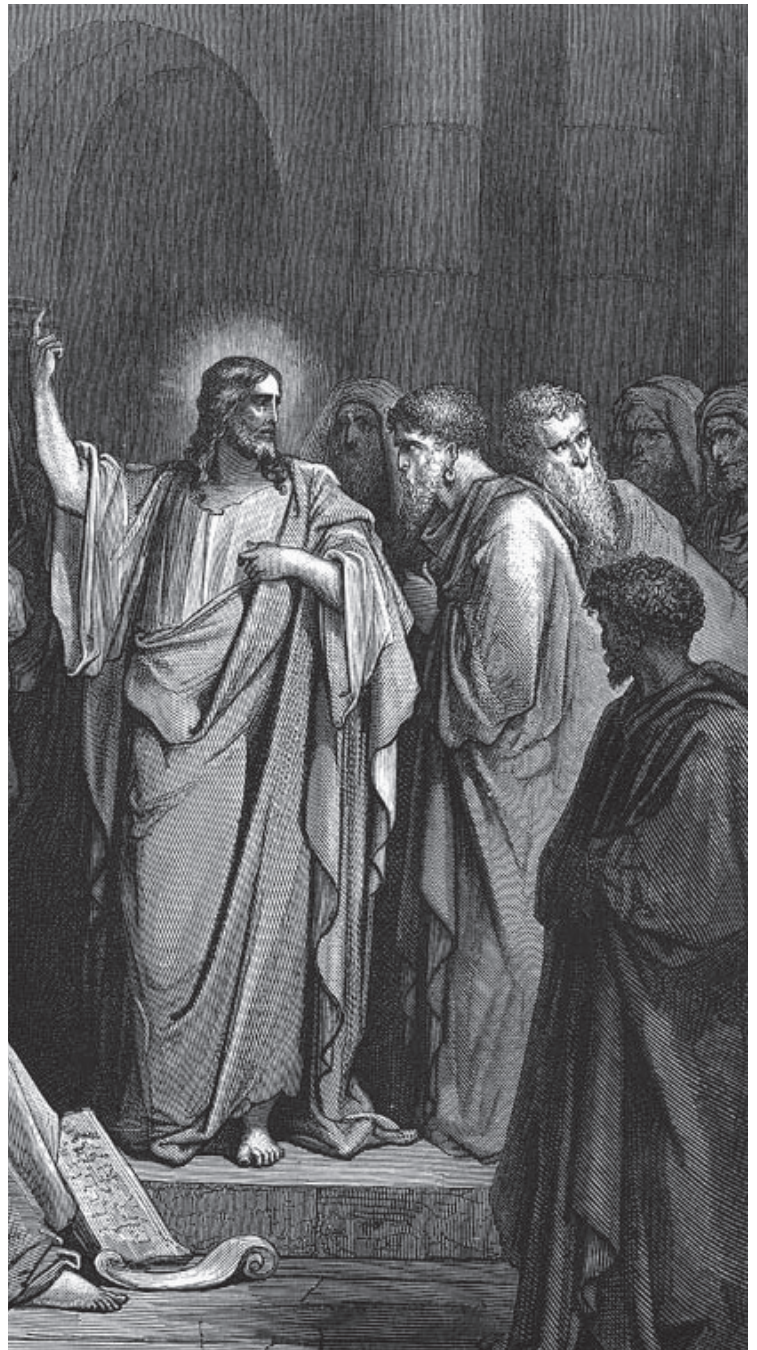
Thomas called out: "When? When will this happen?"

Jesus went on: "A little while now and the world will see me no more; but you see me as one who has life, and you will have life. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

These words of Jesus were faint signs of hope for them, bursting like distant fireworks in the night. In the flash of light they perceived the bright, clear ideas. But fear and doubt quickly dissolved the insights, leaving the disciples awash in darkness again.

Understanding this, Jesus gave the disciples further reassurance He explained that if they loved him, the Father would love them back, and that he would love them and reveal himself to them.

It was too much. The disciples yearned for yesterday's peace, but the wail of tomorrow had already begun. A pall of anxiety cloaked their certainty that something terrible was about to happen.



Jesus' words to the disciples at the last supper gave the assurance that the Spirit would come and be with them always. Jesus said that we would see what the world does not see.

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist Jesus' promise is fulfilled. It is in the breaking of the bread that we remember what he said: "You will see me" because "on that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."