

Scripture Thoughts

As with last Sunday's reading, today's gospel comes from Jesus' Farewell Discourse (John 13-17). Jesus continues to provide reassurance and direction for the small community of trouble-hearted believers (14:1, 5, 8, 22) that understands itself to be oppressed and struggles to live faithfully in his absence (14:1-3, 18-19). Two emphases mark these verses: love for Jesus means obeying his teaching, and God's presence remains with disciples through the Spirit in Jesus' absence. Though he has spoken of the Father's love for the world (John 3:16) and for himself (John 10:17), and his own love for people (John 11:5; 13:1), only once prior to chapter 14 has Jesus used "love" to define the relationship of disciples with himself (John 8:42). To love Jesus is to believe him, to know him, and here to obey him. Jesus' commandments or words reveal God, including God's will that disciples relationally embody the very love that Father and Son share (John 13:34-35; 15:9). Disciples are to live his words. They are to love by doing his works. In this community of love, God's presence is encountered through the Spirit.