Today we hear from John's Gospel, a portion of Jesus' farewell discourse spoken at the Last Supper. In it, he promises not to leave us orphaned, but to send another, an Advocate who will be with us always. He also shares with us his own body and blood in the form of bread and wine. The Eucharist we share at each Mass, as we will today.

The arrival of this Advocate, the Holy Spirit, we celebrate on Pentecost in two weeks. Pentecost in Judaism, called the feast of weeks, was the harvest festival celebrated fifty days after the Passover that celebrates the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. Interestingly Jesus makes a connection between love, keeping the Commandments, and receiving the promised Advocate. 'If you keep my commandments you will receive the Holy Spirit.' The Law given to Moses on
Mount Sinai was the first five books of the Jewish Scriptures. The law that Jesus taught, to love God and to love one's neighbor, is the basis of the Mosaic Law. (Matthew 22:40)

The Holy Spirit fire that will descend on Pentecost is not unlike the fire and cloud from heaven that descended and filled the stone Temple constructed in 950 BC. Like God's fiery presence, evident in the first Temple, so the fire of Pentecost is the sign of God's presence in the body of believers today. God's presence in the first Temple made it the righteous place of worship for ancient Israel, so God's presence among the body of believers makes the new Temple, the human person. As the tabernacle is the place to reserve the Body of Christ in the church, so we are called to be human tabernacles to carry the presence of God into the world. How we carry the Body of Christ into the world is critical.

We become the Body of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and in the sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ. In Holy Communion, we share in the very life of Christ as his Body on earth. The Advocate reminds us of everything Jesus taught during his life. Through his words Jesus taught ‘as one with authority,' but he taught with even more authority through his actions and his physical presence. We share His physical presence today. In this we share more than a recollection of what He said and did and who he was; we share in his ministry of service, in building the Kingdom of God. This is challenging work, but it is a labor of love. What we are called to do is to love God and to love our neighbor. This is our mission.

We are true to this mission when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, and visit the sick and imprisoned. However, it is more than what we do, it is who we are and our very presence to others. Our presence is the fulfillment of God's promise that he will never leave his children orphaned. We are not only the Body of Christ to meet the physical needs of our neighbors; we are also his advocate to remind others of everything Jesus taught, and with the assurance of God's love. This is our participation in the divine life of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. This is lived out, not as individuals, but as a community, in the same way, that the Trinity is more than the three distinct Persons, but in the loving relationships between the three persons, in the total giving and receiving between those who participate.

Just so, as a community of faith, St. Andrew the Apostle carries forward the Christian mission by being an Advocate of love; love for God, and love for neighbor. A place where everyone is welcomed and no one is abandoned.