

**Sunday, June 4, 2017**

**Pentecost Sunday**

**Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion**

**Mass Readings:**

**1st Reading:** Acts 2:1-11

**2nd Reading:** 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

**Responsorial:** Psalm 104:1,24, 29-31, 34

**Gospel:** John 20:19-23

**Celebrating Pentecost, *The Birthday of the Church***

*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:4)*

At his son's twenty-first birthday party, the proud father began a toast by recalling the day his boy was born. "What a wonderful day it was!" he said. "Your mother and I are so glad you came into our lives—although we don't care too much for what you have done since then!" He was joking, of course, and his son knew it. He knew his father loved him and treasured every day they had spent together.

We're celebrating a birthday today as well: the day the Church was born. But as that father's joke showed, there's more to a birthday than remembering the day it all began. So today, let's thank the Holy Spirit for "what he has done since then"!

Think about it: without the Spirit's inspiration, Christian men and women would not have handed down the gospel message from generation to generation until it reached you.

But the Holy Spirit doesn't just live in our great saints, whether past or present. He is also in you, helping you live a holy life. Have you ever felt inspired to reach out to someone in need? That's the Holy Spirit. Have you ever tried to share your faith with someone? That's the Holy Spirit. Have you ever fought hard against temptation and won? That's the Spirit. Have you ever left Mass or come out of a prayer time feeling refreshed and closer to God? That, too, is the Holy Spirit!

So thank him! Think of some small way you can celebrate what he has done and what he is still doing today. Maybe look online to see the different ways Pentecost is marked across the world. Maybe spend a few extra minutes in prayer reading about the gifts of the Spirit. Or maybe treat yourself and your loved ones to a special dessert. After all, it is a birthday!

*"Holy Spirit, I am so grateful that you came to be with your Church and, even more so, that you are with me today!"*

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***Questions for Reflection or Discussion:***

1. The first reading describes the moment when the Holy Spirit “came to rest” on each one of the disciples: “And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”
  - Why do you believe the events of the Day of Pentecost were described in such dramatic terms?
  - Each of us, as baptized and confirmed Catholics, has also received the Holy Spirit. Do you believe that the Lord wants to give you a deeper infilling of his Spirit? How can this happen?
2. Also, in the first reading, the witnesses are described as “confused”, “astounded” and “in amazement.”
  - Why do you think this was so?
  - Do you think that would have been your reaction as well?
3. The response to the responsorial psalm is “Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.”
  - How would you describe the work of the Holy Spirit in renewing the face of the earth?
  - What areas in your life would you like the Holy Spirit to renew?
4. In the second reading, we hear these words: “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”
  - What spiritual gifts have you received from the Holy Spirit that can benefit your family, your parish, and others?
  - What are some possible areas of service that you could undertake to reach out to others or serve more in your parish?
5. The second reading also uses the metaphor of a body to describe our Church, “As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”
  - How tolerant are you of other members of the body of Christ who are different than you?
  - What steps can you take, individually or as a group, to bring more unity to your parish?
  - In what ways can you also reach out to non-Catholics Christians as well?
6. In the Gospel, Jesus’ disciples were full of fear after his resurrection. So his first words to them were words of consolation and reassurance, beginning with “Peace be with you” – the translation of the Hebrew words, “Shalom Aleichem.”
  - Following Jesus’ example, what practical steps can you take to bring the Lord’s love, comfort, and peace to others?
  - What are the obstacles in you that keep you from doing this? What steps can you take to overcome them through the power of the Holy Spirit, which dwells in you?
7. In the meditation, we hear these words, “The Holy Spirit doesn’t just live in our great saints, whether past or present. He is also in you, helping you live a holy life. Have you ever felt inspired to reach out to someone in need? That’s the Holy Spirit. Have you ever tried to share your faith with someone? That’s the Holy Spirit. Have you ever fought hard against temptation and won? That’s the Spirit. Have you ever left Mass or come out of a prayer time feeling refreshed and closer to God? That, too, is the Holy Spirit!”
  - In what ways has the Holy Spirit helped you to “live a holy life”? Can you give some examples?
  - In what specific ways would you have the Holy Spirit manifest himself more powerfully in your life?
8. Take some time now to pray and thank the Holy Spirit for coming to dwell in the Church, and in you, in order to “guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

***“Holy Spirit, I am so grateful that you came to be with your Church and, even more so, that you are with me today!”***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the **National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal** (<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>) and a member of the board of

directors of the **Christlife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization** (<https://christlife.org/>). Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men**. He can be contacted at [mblumberg@wau.org](mailto:mblumberg@wau.org) or [mblumberg@aol.com](mailto:mblumberg@aol.com).]