

# Sunday, May 31, 2020

## 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

### Receiving More of the Holy Spirit's Power and the Gifts of the Spirit

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

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he told the apostles that they would be “baptized with the holy Spirit” (Acts 1:5). So together with Mary, they “devoted themselves with one accord to prayer” (1:14). And sure enough, the Holy Spirit came—with wind and fire and with a new boldness to preach the gospel.

Pentecost tells a beautiful story about God's power and the apostles' transformation. But they didn't receive the Spirit just that one day. They were immersed in the Spirit again and again. The Book of Acts records at least seven times that the apostles were “filled” with the Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 6:8; 7:55; 13:9, 52). And this doesn't count all the other times that never made it into the Bible!

The same is true for us. Although we received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, we too need more of the Spirit's power and gifts to follow the Lord and proclaim the good news.

Jesus knew how much we would need the Holy Spirit, and so even long before his Ascension, he encouraged his disciples to pray for this gift: “If you . . . know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit?” (Luke 11:13). And John's Gospel assures us that God “does not ration his gift of the Spirit” (3:34). There is always more that God has for us!

Today, follow the apostles' example. Believe in God's promise of the Spirit and then pray for it. Keep praying, not just on this special feast, but every day. You might even ask a few faith-filled friends to pray with you for a new outpouring of the Spirit in your life. You may not see wind or fire, but the Spirit will come to you in new, unexpected, and even extraordinary ways—not only for your benefit, but for the good of his body, the Church!

*“Holy Spirit, make your home in my heart, today and every day.”*

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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### Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading opens with these words: *When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. 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.* The crowd that was gathered reacted in this way: *They were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement.*
  - Why do you believe the events of the Day of Pentecost were described in such dramatic terms?
  - The crowd of 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? What about your reaction now?
2. The response to the responsorial psalm is “Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.” The responsorial psalm begins with these words: *Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, you are great indeed! How manifold are your works, O Lord! The earth is full of your creatures. If you take away their breath, they perish and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.*
  - What are the differences between the response to the responsorial psalm and the similar words in the psalm?
  - 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? What are some steps you can take to allow this to happen?
3. 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.* The reading closes with these words: *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.*
  - What gifts have you received from the Holy Spirit that can benefit your family, your parish, and others?
  - What are some areas of service that you could undertake to reach out to others or serve more in your parish?
  - How tolerant are you of the *many parts* of the body of Christ that are different than you?
  - What steps can you take, individually or as a group, to bring more unity to your parish?
4. In the Gospel reading, Jesus’ first words to his disciples were words of consolation and reassurance, beginning with *Peace be with you.* The reading continues with these words: *When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”*
  - Why do you think the disciples’ fear changed to rejoicing when Jesus said: *Peace be with you*?
  - Following Jesus’ example, what 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?
5. The meditation tells us that, “Although we received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, we too need more of the Spirit’s power and gifts to follow the Lord and proclaim the good news.” It continues with these words: “Today, follow the apostles’ example. Believe in God’s promise of the Spirit and then pray for it. Keep praying, not just on this special feast, but every day. You might even ask a few faith-filled friends to pray with you for a new outpouring of the Spirit in your life.”
  - Do you believe that “Although we received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, we too need more of the Spirit’s power and gifts to follow the Lord and proclaim the good news”? How can this happen?
  - Are you willing to “follow the apostles’ example” and “Believe in God’s promise of the Spirit and then pray for it ... not just on this special feast, but every day”? If not, why not?
  - Are you also willing to “ask a few faith-filled friends to pray with you for a new outpouring of the Spirit in your life”? What would hold you back from doing it? What do you think would be the fruits of doing this?

**Take some time now to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to always dwell in your heart and 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, make your home in my heart, today and every day.”***