



# LIVING THE GOSPEL



**Pentecost Sunday.  
June 8<sup>th</sup> 2025**

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**Theme: "Peace be with you."**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** God, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

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

<sup>19</sup> In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', <sup>20</sup> and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, <sup>21</sup> and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

<sup>22</sup> After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit.

<sup>23</sup> For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

## **Gospel Focus**

In this gospel, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure and for the next stage of their journey with him. After the intense three years of Jesus' public ministry, after his death and resurrection, they need to transition to a more sustainable mode of following Jesus. They are now in for the long haul of Christian life, responsible for testifying to what they have seen and handing down the tradition they have received. Jesus will no longer be present in the same way, but we will continue to be present to them through the Holy Spirit. This Spirit will sustain their work, as the same Spirit does for the church today.

## **Gospel Reflection**

Breath is the very symbol of life and has been since ancient times. Indeed, the first creation account in Genesis depicts the life force of the Creator as *ruah*, meaning "breath" or "wind," which swept over the face of the primordial waters. And in the

second account of creation, the first human creature becomes a living being only when the Creator breathes the breath of life into its nostrils (Gen 2:7). At Pentecost, this same divine life force recreates a frightened group of disciples into bold proclaimers of the gospel.

The symbols of divine presence described in Acts 2 are familiar from the Old Testament: thundering noise, as God's manifestation at Sinai: a whirlwind, like that from which God spoke to Job (Job 38:1); and flames of fire, such as Moses saw at Mount Horeb (Exod 3:2). God's presence is visible and audible, profoundly transforming those who experience it. The disciples like anyone who has experienced death of a loved one, would have felt that something of their own spirit and zest for life had also been snuffed out with Jesus' death. Huddled together, trying to comfort one another, they were unable to muster any energy for carrying on his mission.

In both gospel choices for today, we have a glimpse of some concrete ways on which the Spirit brings them and us back to life so as to go forth again in mission. In John 14, Jesus is telling his disciples before his passion that he will not leave them alone. He promises to send the Paraclete to be always with them. Only the fourth Evangelist uses this term for the Spirit. It comes from the legal world and connotes one who stands alongside another, as advocate or as comforter. Not only does the Paraclete teach the disciples and remind them of everything Jesus told them, but this consoling One is as near as one's own breath. When Jesus speaks to those whom he loves of their oneness with him and with the One who sent him, he speaks of mutual indwelling.

In John 20, the risen Christ breathes on the disciples and infuses them with the Spirit. He unleashes in them the power of the Spirit, who alone can bring peace and joy in the wake of terrifying woundedness. He directs them to open themselves to the gift of the Spirit that allows them to receive and give forgiveness. For it is only through the power of forgiveness that the air can be cleared and all can breathe in the peace for which we so long and which the risen One desires to give.

Perhaps it is breath that best signals this intimacy, God, in the person of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, is as close to each and every believer as is our very breath, taken deeply into our lungs thousands of times every day, a constant vivifying force. Just as breath must be exhaled and cannot be kept within so too does the Spirit's power direct us outward to mission, exuding the love, peace, and forgiveness we have inhaled from the Living One.

## **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**645.** By means of touch and the sharing of a meal, the risen Jesus establishes direct contact with his disciples. He invites them in this way to recognize that he is not a ghost and above all to verify that the risen body in which he appears to them is the same body that had been tortured and crucified, for it still bears the traces of his Passion. (Cf. *Lk* 24:30,39-40,41-43; *Jn* 20:20,27; 21:9,13-15) Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm. (Cf. *Mt* 28:9, 16-17; *Lk* 24:15,36; *Jn* 20:14,17,19,26; 21:4) For this reason too the risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith. (Cf. *Mk* 16:12; *Jn* 20:14-16; 21:4,7)

**858.** Jesus is the Father's Emissary. From the beginning of his ministry, he "called to him those whom he desired; . . . And he appointed twelve, whom also he named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to preach." (*Mk* 3:13-14) From then on, they would also be his "emissaries" (Greek *apostoloi*). In them, Christ continues his own

mission: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." (*Jn* 20:21; cf. 13:20; 17:18) The apostles' ministry is the continuation of his mission; Jesus said to the Twelve: "he who receives you receives me." (*Mt* 10:40; cf. *Lk* 10:16)

**1287.** This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*. (Cf. *Ezek* 36:25-27; *Joel* 3:1-2) On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit, (Cf. *Lk* 12:12; *Jn* 3:5-8; 7:37-39; 16:7-15; *Acts* 1:8) a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost. (Cf. *Jn* 20:22; *Acts* 2:1-14) Filled with the Holy Spirit the apostles began to proclaim "the mighty works of God," and Peter declared this outpouring of the Spirit to be the sign of the messianic age. (*Acts* 2:11; Cf. 2:17-18) Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn. (Cf. *Acts* 2:38)

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — Acts 2:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.  
<sup>2</sup>And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. <sup>3</sup>Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. <sup>4</sup>And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. <sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.  
<sup>7</sup>They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?  
<sup>9</sup>We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, <sup>11</sup>both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

### **Responsorial Reading — Ps 97:1-2, 6-7, 9**

***R: Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. (R)***

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. **(R)**

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.  
**(R)**

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord be glad in his works!  
Pleasing to him be my theme; I will be glad in the Lord. **(R)**

### **Second Reading — 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13**

<sup>3</sup>..Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.  
<sup>4</sup>There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>there are different forms of service but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>there are different workings but the same God

who produces all of them in everyone.

<sup>7</sup>To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

<sup>12</sup>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.

<sup>13</sup>For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. What is Pentecost Sunday? And what is our Lord's message to you?
2. Today's responsorial psalm reads, "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth." In what ways can the Spirit renew the face of the earth? Your world?
3. In the gospel reading, we find one of the scriptural sources for the sacrament of reconciliation. What was your first experience of reconciliation like? Was it positive or negative? Have you celebrated reconciliation recently? If not, what is holding you back?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** God, you send your Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth. May your Spirit of renewal touch the hearts, minds and souls that we have offered to you in prayer this day. We ask this through Jesus' name. Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen.