



# LIVING THE GOSPEL

## Pentecost Sunday May 24, 2026

**Theme: "As the Father sent me, I send you."**

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### **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.

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

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." <sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

### **Gospel Focus**

Since the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is recounted in today's reading from Acts, the gospel reading taken from John shares a post resurrection appearance of Jesus. After the ascension, the church becomes essentially outward facing, missioned of the world. The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is the primary catalyst of this mission, but this gospel reading also consist of a commissioning story. Jesus breathes on the disciples, symbolically offering them the Holy Spirit, the breath of life and love shared between the Father and the Son. Interestingly, the primary task that the disciples receive from Jesus is the forgiveness of sins through the Spirit. Even in our time, when we receive the sacrament of reconciliation, the prayer of absolution tells us that the Holy Spirit is "poured out for the forgiveness of sins." The task of the Spirit is to gather us together in unity, wiping away those things that separate us from relationship with God and one another.

### **Gospel Reflection**

"The day will come when," wrote Teilhard de Chardin, "after harnessing the winds, the tides, and the gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of Love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, [human kind] will have discovered fire" (*Toward the Future*). Teilhard likening our ability to harness the forces of love to that of controlling fire for good purposes taps into one of the metaphors used by Luke in

today's first reading.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the metaphor of tongues of fire is used to describe the divine power unleashed in the disciples at Pentecost. Although some Christian artwork depicts this literally, with little flames hovering over the heads of the disciples, Luke is clearly using symbolic language that evokes the same earth shattering experience of the Holy One by the Israelites at Sinai. Moses had brought the whole of the twelfth tribes to the foot of the mountain to encounter God. The mountain was then "completely enveloped in smoke, because the Lord had come down upon it in fire" and "the whole mountain trembled violently" (Exod 19:18).

So, too, at Pentecost, the whole entourage of Jesus' followers were gathered together in one place (Acts 1:14). The believers numbered 120 persons (Acts 1:15), a symbolic number for the whole people. A strong driving wind fills the house, much as the mighty wind that swept over the chaotic waters at creation (Gen 1:2). The wind and fire are symbols evocative of re-creation, not only on a personal level, emboldening frightened followers, but also signals of a rebirth on as cosmic scale that will result from their mission to ignite Christ's love everywhere.

Images of rebirth are strong in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Paul speaks about the groaning of the whole of creation, still in the throes of labor, as God's work of birthing new life continues unceasingly. He speaks also of how our groaning joins that of the cosmos, as we experience the pangs of redemption and hope coming to fruition through the Spirit's movement in and through us. Paul affirms that the Spirit herself echoes these inexpressible groaning, as she acts as a midwife, drawing forth the new life longing to emerge.

What is notable about the image of birthing that Paul uses to speak the unleashing of the power of the Spirit is that concurs with the direction in which the power of the cosmos moves. The movement of birth from inside the womb outward to life in the world mirrors the dynamic of the universe that is ever expanding with life from the center outward, in gorgeously creative, chaotic, irreplicable patterns. Pentecost, then, is not so much about the power of God coming from outside us down onto us but a releasing of the power that is already within us, breathed into us by God at creation (Gen 2:7) and by the risen Christ still among us (Jn 20:22). As the gospel affirms, it is particularly through acts of forgiveness that we can harness for God the energies of love, setting a contagious fire from the re-creation that is groaning to emerge.

## **New Testament links**

### **First Reading: Acts 1:1-11**

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.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?"

Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?

We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, 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 Psalm: Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34**

#### **R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

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 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13**

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. 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. 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, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

### **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**2.** So that this call should resound throughout the world, Christ sent forth the apostles he had chosen, commissioning them to proclaim the gospel: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."(Mt 28:19-20) Strengthened by this mission, the apostles "went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it."(Mk 16:20)

**80.** "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal."(DV 9) Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age".(Mt 28:20)

**543.** *Everyone* is called to enter the kingdom. First announced to the children of Israel, this messianic kingdom is intended to accept men of all nations.(Cf. Mt 8:11 10:5-7; 28:19) To enter it, one must first accept Jesus' word:

The word of the Lord is compared to a seed which is sown in a field; those who hear it with faith and are numbered among the little flock of Christ have truly received the kingdom. Then, by its own power, the seed sprouts and grows until the harvest.(LC 5; cf. Mk 4:14, 26-29; Lk 12:32)

**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)

**849.** *The missionary mandate.* "Having been divinely sent to the nations that she might be 'the universal sacrament of salvation,' the Church, in obedience to the command of her founder and because it is demanded by her own essential universality, strives to preach the Gospel to all men"(AG 1; cf. Mt 16:15) "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age."(Mt 28:19-20)

**1257.** The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.(Cf. Jn 3:5) He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them.(Cf. Mt 28:19-20; cf. Council of Trent (1547) DS 1618; LG 14; AG 5) Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.(Cf. Mk 16:16) The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

**1287.** This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to the whole messianic people.<sup>94</sup> On several occasions Christ promised this outpouring of the Spirit,<sup>95</sup> a promise which he fulfilled first on Easter Sunday and then more strikingly at Pentecost.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> Those who believed in the apostolic preaching and were baptized received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their turn.<sup>98</sup>

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. The responsorial Psalm invites the Holy Spirit to renew our world. Where does your relationship with God need renewal? How can you be a part of renewal in your faith community?
2. "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. In a world where God can sometimes feel distant or unseen, what has helped you continue to believe in His presence and love?
3. Greeting the disciples in the locked room, Jesus' first words are, "Peace be with you." Where in your life have you recognized peace as a fruit of the Holy Spirit? Where do you remain in need of God's peace?

## **Closing Prayer**

**Facilitator:** Loving God fill us with the Spirit of your love and give us the courage to use the gifts you given each of us. Hear our prayers so that filled with your Spirit we may do your will. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

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

**All:** Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our **“Living The Gospel”** Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God’s Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Every Saturday from 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information or to RSVP, please contact;

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Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
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