



LIVING THE GOSPEL



**Pentecost Sunday
May 19, 2024**

Theme: "But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth"

Gathering Prayer

All: O 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 15:26-27,16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples: ²⁶When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness.

²⁷And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset.

¹²I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now.

¹³But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come.

¹⁴He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine.

¹⁵Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said:

All he tells you will be taken from what is mine.'

Gospel Focus

The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost completes and concludes the Easter season. The resurrection of Christ affirmed that his love and presence endure beyond death; the sending of the Spirit affirms that they also endure beyond the visible, physical presence that his disciples enjoyed. This same Spirit has been present throughout Jesus' life. It is the same Spirit that came upon Mary at the annunciation; it is the same Spirit that drove Jesus into the desert to pray. It is a Spirit that accompanies and guides and sustains Jesus throughout his ministry; it is the same Spirit that accompanies and guides and sustains us as we strive to continue Jesus' ministry on earth. This is a Spirit that brings about unity, dissolving the many barriers that divide us.

Gospel Reflection

Like a faceted gem whose brilliance takes different contours when examined from distinct angles, today's readings open up multiple dimensions of meaning for the feast of Pentecost. The gift of the Spirit to the disciples is one more facet of the ineffable mystery that encompasses Jesus' passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification. For the Fourth Evangelist these all occur in one instant. Luke, in contrast, narrates each of these as a separate event, with precise time markers. He tells of resurrection appearances that took place over forty days before the ascension (Acts 1:3). Now on Pentecost, literally, the fiftieth day after Passover, the gift of the Spirit comes with audible and visible signs.

In Luke's infancy narrative, all the characters are filled with the Spirit: John the Baptist (1:15, 17), Mary (1:35), Elizabeth (1:41), Zechariah (1:67), and Simeon (2:25-27). But once Jesus begins his ministry, only he is said to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. Now on Pentecost his followers receive this gift. Its first manifestation is facile communication across boundaries of difference. In Jerusalem, there are Jewish residents (*katoikountes* means residents, not visitors for the feast) from every nation, and each understands in their native language. Luke gives us a powerful image of unity that is created when preachers, teachers, and catechists, gifted by the Spirit, adopt the culture and language of those with whom they share the good news.

In the Gospel of John, the Spirit is handed over at the moment of Jesus' death: Jesus declares, "It is finished," and simultaneously he "handed over the Spirit" (19:30). This expression is not a euphemism for death, it is nowhere used that way in Scripture or in secular Greek literature. Again at 20:22 Jesus breathes on the disciples on Easter evening, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." He revivifies them, just as the Creator did in bringing to life the first human being by blowing the breath of life into the nostrils (Gen 2:7).

The risen Christ passes through locked doors and empowers the disciples with the Spirit to continue his mission of unlocking with the gift of forgiveness any hearts bound in fear. The offer of forgiveness does not erase or make light of the wounds that have been inflicted, but it surrounds the woundedness with a power that moves toward healing and peace. The Spirit also enables the community of believers to hold on to each member and not lose anyone. In the second half of verse 23 there is no word "sins" in the Greek text. It does not speak of retaining "sins" of others but of a Spirit-enabled power to retain every beloved one, just as Jesus did not let a single one be lost (6:37, 39; 10: 27-29; 17:12; 18:9).

Today we can consider: What gifts has the Spirit given me for welcoming the stranger? How can I understand better their ways of hearing the gospel? We can also ask the Spirit to help us claim the gift of forgiveness and the wisdom not to let go of any of God's beloved.

Old/New Testament and CCC links

First Reading — Acts 2:1-11

¹When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, ²when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; ³and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them.

⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

⁵Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, ⁶and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. ⁷They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? ⁸How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea

and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – ¹¹Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.

Responsorial Psalm — Psalm 103(104):1,24,29-31,34

(R): Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are,
How many are your works, O Lord. The earth is full of riches. **(R)**

You take back your spirit, they die, returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. **(R)**

May the glory of the Lord last for ever! May the Lord rejoice in his works!
May my thoughts be pleasing to him. I find my joy in the Lord. **(R)**

Second Reading — Galations 5: 16-25

¹⁶If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, ¹⁷since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you. ¹⁹When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; ²⁰idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, ²¹factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against things like that, of course. ²⁴You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires.

²⁵Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit.

Catechism of The Catholic Church

263. The mission of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son (Jn 14:26) and by the Son "from the Father" (Jn 15:26), reveals that, with them, the Spirit is one and the same God. "With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified" (Nicene Creed).

687. "No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God." Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and disposes us to welcome him in faith. The Spirit of truth who "unveils" Christ to us "will not speak on his own." Such properly divine self-effacement explains why "the world cannot receive [him], because it neither sees him nor knows him," while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them.

1433. Since Easter, the Holy Spirit has proved "the world wrong about sin," i.e., proved that the world has not believed in him whom the Father has sent. But this same Spirit

who brings sin to light is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace for repentance and conversion.

2466. In Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. "Full of grace and truth," he came as the "light of the world," *he is the Truth*. "Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness." The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know "the truth [that] will make you free" and that sanctifies. To follow Jesus is to live in "the Spirit of truth," whom the Father sends in his name and who leads "into all the truth."²⁶⁰ To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: "Let what you say be simply 'Yes or No.'"

2671. The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit. Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment when he promises the gift of the Spirit of Truth. But the simplest and most direct prayer is also traditional, "Come, Holy Spirit," and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Heavenly King, Consoler Spirit, Spirit of Truth, present everywhere and filling all things, treasure of all good and source of all life, come dwell in us, cleanse and save us, you who are All Good.

Sharing and Discussion

1. When did you first become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
2. Has the Holy Spirit made a difference in your life?
3. How can we develop our relationship with the Holy Spirit?

Closing Prayer

All: Creative God, you sent the Holy Spirit to fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. On this Solemnity of Pentecost, we give thanks and praise for your Spirit's attention to our prayers and abiding presence in our lives. We offer these prayers through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

All: Amen