

Lectio Divina

Pentecost Sunday – Year A – May 24, 2026

Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 103:1,24,29-31,34. R.v.30; Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

Lectio

Today's readings are all about God's gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles and to each of us.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles describes the incredible scenes of Pentecost. Pentecost was a harvest feast celebrated by the Jewish people 50 days after Passover. For Christians, it is celebrated 50 days after the resurrection and signifies the birth of the Church and its mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. We see also Jesus giving the apostles authority to forgive sins.

The Second Reading from St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians teaches us how the Holy Spirit operates, giving different gifts to different people, all for the building up of the Kingdom.

And the Gospel from St John, serves as a prequel to Pentecost. It gives the account of the Risen Jesus, on the evening of Easter Sunday, coming to the disciples, offering them peace, breathing the Holy Spirit on them, and giving them their mission of forgiveness.

Meditatio

- In the first reading I am struck by the overwhelming sensory experience of Pentecost. They *heard* what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven – a noise which filled the whole house. And then they *saw* what seemed like tongues of fire coming to rest on the heads of each of them. After this, they were *filled* with the Holy Spirit and began to *speak* foreign languages through the gift of the Spirit. God meets us through our humanity – although perhaps not always so spectacularly as this!
- Secondly, I notice the immediate response to mission. Once filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles wasted no time in sharing the Good News with others.
- At Pentecost, we see the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel turned on its head. At Babel, God confused the languages of those trying to build a tower that would reach the heavens, so that nobody could understand each other. But at Pentecost, God, through the Holy Spirit, gives the apostles the gift of many languages so that all those listening, no matter where they were from, could hear and understand “about the marvels of God”. Where there was division and discord, now there is unity in diversity.
- In the second reading, St Paul gives us further insight into the workings of the Holy Spirit. Paul is emphatic that there is unity, but not uniformity in the Spirit: “There is a variety of gifts, but always the same Spirit”. The Spirit works in different ways in different people, just as the human body is made up of many parts, each of which have their own distinct role, but are an integral part of the whole.
- And in the Gospel, we read that on Easter Sunday, in the shadow of the crucifixion, the disciples are gathered together behind closed doors, in fear. But then Jesus *enters into* that fear, and we hear the words so synonymous with the Risen Christ: “Peace be with you.” Seeing his wounds, and believing, the disciples were “filled with joy”. In the next exchange we see the Holy Trinity in action. “As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.” Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”. Not only are we, like the apostles, sent out, but we are equipped for the mission through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Oratio/Evangelisatio

My response to today's readings is a deep desire to turn away from fear and locked doors and places of dejection in my life and turn towards the peace of the Risen Jesus. It is to understand that Jesus' wounds had not disappeared when he rose from the dead, but were transformed. And that in the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to me in baptism and confirmation and experienced in my life through prayer, Word and sacrament, I too am transformed, strengthened, empowered, guided, and sent out. The big question is, am I always open to "Receive the Holy Spirit" and respond to the challenges and disruptions it might present? Or do I sometimes prefer the comfort and safety of hiding behind closed doors?

Dear Lord, May I always continue to discern the gifts given to me by the Holy Spirit for the part I am invited to play in the Kingdom. And may I look for the Spirit's gifts in others, too. Through the Holy Spirit, may I be enlivened to be a person of peace, forgiveness and joy and to not be afraid to share the gifts bestowed on me. Amen.

"Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth."

Oblate Debra (Benedicta) Vermeer.