

The Feast of Pentecost - Year A

FIRST READING

Acts 2:1-11

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."

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RESPONSORIAL PSALM

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

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

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

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 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,

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whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

GOSPEL

John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."
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."

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Discussion for Readings - The Feast of Pentecost, Year A

Opening Reflection: (Focused on the Gospel reading - commentaries from the catechism as outlined in the Didache Bible)

In the Gospel reading, Christ has a glorified body with the marks of His Crucifixion in a glorified form as a sign of resounding victory. The bodies of the just will likewise be glorified at the Final Judgement. (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 645,659,690,1042,1060)

Also in the Gospel reading, immediately following the Resurrection, the ultimate sign of victory over sin and death, Christ instituted the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation by giving the Apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins in his name. Breathing on the Apostles – Sometimes referred to as “John’s Pentecost” – was a foreshadowing of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Thus, they received the Holy Spirit from Christ and were empowered to act in His name. For His Apostles, the first ordained priests, the power to forgive sins was a vital part of their role of sanctifying the people. In sending them forth into the world, He charged them with continuing His mission of spiritual healing through the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. Belief in the forgiveness of sins is an essential statement of the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, which are prayed in the Church’s liturgy. (see the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 730,858,976-980,1287,1485-1488)

1. Question 1. What is happening in the reading or opening reflection that stood out or grabbed your attention?

2. When have you felt the Holy Spirit leading you beyond your comfort zone, and how did you respond? Conversely, when have you sensed that prompting yet hesitated or chosen not to act?

3. What can you do this week to avoid hesitation and use the Holy Spirit's guidance to be an example or lead others to Christ?

Closing Reflection

In one sense, Pentecost was a jumping-off point for the early Church. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples went forth from that experience to preach and teach the Good News to people of many backgrounds. They didn't all have the same gifts - remember the disputes of Jew versus Gentile or who should preach and who should serve the widows? None of these members of the early Church had the whole picture or the complete ability to carry Jesus' message to all people. However, their different gifts manifested the same Spirit with God's unconditional love and together they were able to carry out their mission to all people. Emboldened by Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit would always be with them, together they had the courage to go where they were sent, to reach far beyond their comfort zones, to travel to foreign lands.

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