



# Bible Study Pentecost Sunday Year A

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June 4, 2017  
Volume 1, Issue 26

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." Jn. 20:21-23 (NABRE)

## Reading I: Acts 2:1-11

### **POUR OUT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT!** St.

Augustine, the celebrated North African Saint and Doctor of the Church, captured the essence of what it means for the Holy Spirit to be poured out on us. He wrote, "*Breath in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy. Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy. Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.*" These are refreshing thoughts as we celebrate Pentecost, which is often referred as the birth of the Church. With the above-mentioned words, St. Augustine persuades us to invite the Holy Spirit



**POUR OUT YOUR  
HOLY SPIRIT!**

into the innermost portions of our being. On Pentecost, we must ask God to pour out His Spirit.

Pentecost, or fiftieth was an important feast of the annual Jewish calendar. It celebrated the harvest of the first fruits of the wheat crop. Every male who was not legitimately impeded was expected to travel to the temple in Jerusalem. God chose this feast to pour His Spirit on the world and begin the universal spread of His kingdom. In these verses from Acts, the Spirit is the breath and the life of God. His presence recalls the creation of Adam in Genesis. (**Gen. 2: 7**) The sounds heard by all are reminiscent of the sound of thunder when the commandments were given on Mount Sinai (**Ex. 19:18**). The tongues of fire are the illuminating quality of God's truth (**Jn. 14:17**). The apostles had already received the Holy Spirit when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection (**Jn. 20:22**, See the Gospel). At Pentecost, the apostles received the authority and courage to speak that truth to the whole world. Thus, we have a new covenant or agreement between God and the whole world. Present were North Africans like Egyptians, Libyans, and Cyreneans. There were also Arabians, Asians and people from other parts of the world. God poured His Spirit of Truth on the whole world. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** When did you receive the Holy Spirit? What is, "Life in the Spirit"?

## The Spirit Interprets the Thoughts of God The Catechism of the Catholic Church

**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.

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm#>

## Reading II: 1 Cor. 12: 3b-7, 12-13

**POUR OUT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT!** In this letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul demonstrates how the presence of the Holy Spirit helped the early Church to spread. The underlying idea is "charity" (**12:31-13:13**). The church, the Body of Christ, is build by sharing the gifts of the Spirit.

In this letter, St. Paul addressed many issues that needed attention in the early church. He addressed the confusion in Corinth over the superiority of the gift of speaking in tongues. He acknowledged that speaking in tongues is a gift of the Spirit. St. Paul, himself, used it and may have introduced it to the community (**14:6-14 and 18-19**). St. Paul clarified the emphasis on speaking in tongues and explained the gift of the Spirit in the following ways (**vv: 3-13**): 1) To have the Spirit means to confess that Jesus, the Crucified Son of God, is Lord. Corinthians viewed the crucifixion as a past event. 2) The gifts of the Spirit take on a different form in everyone. Every gift has a purpose and is to be used for the common good. 3) The gift of the Spirit must lead to the building up of the corporate body of the community. The church is one body through a common baptism. This is what St. Paul meant by the "drinking of one Spirit" in versus 12-13 **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What gift are you using to build the Body of Christ?

## Bible Study – Pentecost Sunday Page 2

### Gospel: John 20:19-23

**POUR OUT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT!** The liturgical year of the church is rich in spiritual gifts. This Easter Cycle closes with the feast of Pentecost. During Advent, we prepare for the coming of the Son of God to live with us. It is the love of God that we celebrate. During Lent, we focus on the sufferings of our Lord as a way to understand our own sufferings in the light of the triumph of Resurrection Sunday. Pentecost crowns the work of God in us as He gives us His Spirit to live His Gospel through the rest of the year. This is but a small example of how the Holy Spirit is poured out on us through the sacraments and the liturgy of His Holy Church.

The Gospel shows how God poured His Spirit on His Church. Among other things, this post-resurrection appearance of Jesus has dual importance in St. John's Gospel. It validates Jesus' bodily resurrection, and it provided the setting for the commissioning of Jesus' disciples. It is the same Gospel from the Second Sunday of Easter and resembles other Gospel scenes such as: **Matt. 26:16-20; Luke 24:33-49; and Mark. 16:14-20.** The Gospel of John presents this appearance of Jesus on Easter evening. The seventh day of the week represented God's finished work of Creation (**Gen. 2:1-3**). The Lord's Day (**v. 19**) represents Christ's finished redemptive work; the "New Covenant or Testament and in essence a "new creation".

The Holy Spirit of God is poured out on the disciples in the closed room when Jesus enters through the locked doors. Neither the cross, grave clothes, the rocky tomb, nor locked doors could contain Him (**v. 19**). He enters the room and first pours out "Peace". This is not the typical greeting. He is not wishing spiritual well being; He is giving it (**see 14:19**).

With the authority that He has from the Father, Jesus sends the disciples on the same mission that He started. There are five references to the Great Commission. (See **Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8**). To complete the mission, they needed the Power of the Holy Spirit. So He breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit" (**v. 20**). He poured on them the authority to forgive sin in His name. He poured on them and us the power and authority to call all people to Christ.

**DISCUSSION QUESTION:** Jesus gave His disciples peace, what impact does forgiveness have on peace? How do you reconcile your disagreements to return to a state of peace?

### PRAY ABOUT IT!

#### Monday

Read 1 Cor 12:12-13. Speak a kind word to someone.

#### Tuesday

Read 1 Cor. 12:7-11. Write down the gifts of the Spirit that you possess.

#### Wednesday

John 20:20-23. Give a donation to the poor.

#### Thursday

Read Mk. 16:14-20. What have you been called to do?

#### Friday

Attend Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### THE GIFT OF TONGUES

In 1 Cor 14 Paul deals more specifically with the gift of tongues and its exercise in the church. In this chapter the tongue is not an intelligible language, for it cannot be understood by the listeners. Therefore, a parallel to the gift of tongues is the gift of interpretation. The gift of tongues was used as a means of worship, thanksgiving, and prayer. While exercising this gift, the individual addresses God not man; and the result is to edify himself and not the church (1 Cor. 14:2, 4). This gift is never intended for self-exaltation but for the praise and glorification of God. Paul does not prohibit speaking in tongues in a public service (14:39). But he seems to assign it to a lesser place than the gift of prophecy. Paul claims for himself the gift of tongues-speaking, but apparently he exercised this gift in private and not in public (14:18-19). (From Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

**Resources:** *The Gospel According to Matthew, Introduction to the New Testament*, Raymond E. Brown S.S. Doubleday New York, Ny. Pp 358-389; *Acts of the Apostles*, William S. Kurtz, S. J. ; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 1037-1040; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2014*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.ND. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 146-149; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Sunday Readings Cycle A, Kevin O' Sullivan, O.F.M Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 201-207; <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism>:

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2017