

## **Pentecost Sunday**

### **Scripture Readings**

#### **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."

#### **Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 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.

#### **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."

## **Pentecost Sunday**

### **Psalm 104**

**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;

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.

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.

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

**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, God, forever and ever. Amen.**

## Pentecost Sunday

### What Does It All Mean?

#### First Reading: Acts 2:1-11

On the feast of the Torah, or Pentecost, which falls fifty days after the Passover, Jews from all nations have made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. A noise like a strong, driving wind makes itself heard over the clamor of a great crowd. Soon after this, the pilgrims witness something strange. Some Galileans speak, yet everyone can understand. To the person in the crowd, the marvel is that each hears Peter and companions speaking in his or her native tongue. Leading up to the first public act of the church after Jesus' ascension, Luke's narrative has given us a peek into the room where the disciples hide. When they hear the noise, tongues like fire rest on each of them. They are filled with the Holy Spirit. They express themselves in foreign tongues and make bold proclamation. They have seen Jesus risen from the dead, but they also know that they are in peril. The real marvel is that this is the same bunch who had once deserted Jesus at his execution. Now they burst into multinational assortment of people to announce Jesus' own good news.

*Though the exact location for Pentecost is not given, many scholars contend that it took place in the same "upper room" (aka the cenacle) where the Last Supper was held seven weeks earlier. Many believe this home with the upper room to be owned by St. Mark's mother, as it served as sort of a "home base" for the apostles in Jerusalem.*

*The word "Pentecost" literally means "50<sup>th</sup> day" as the feast is celebrated 50 days after Passover. On the feast of Pentecost, the Jews celebrated a harvest festival but it was also closely connected to the Jews reception of the Law of God through Moses atop Mount Sinai. Just as God touched Earth in a powerful way atop Mount Sinai, now the Holy Spirit would touch Earth with his power, yet again.*

#### Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

Paul's first verse teaches that only in the Holy Spirit can anyone say "Jesus is Lord." It seems to suggest that a person's ability to say particular words is evidence of the Holy Spirit. But Paul knows as well as you and I do that anyone can speak any words, with little effort. History offers countless examples of proper words used improperly. Jesus seems to have insisted that words alone mean nothing. Paul understands that we say "Jesus is Lord" in words and in actions. Faithful actions have everything to do with Paul's understanding of unity-in-diversity. Most of the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians compares the various gifts in the church to the functions of different parts of the body. This text excerpts a few verses to represent the whole. There are many gifts, but the same Spirit. We do different things, but for the same purpose, for the common good. There are many members in the body. We were all baptized in the one Spirit into the body that is Christ.

Paul implies that when we use our gifts for the common good, we say with every fiber of our being, "Jesus is Lord." That is something we can only do in the Holy Spirit.

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

If frequency of proclamation allows us to draw a conclusion, they may be the Bible's most important verses. We read them every year, twice. We cannot hear these words too often, for they speak the deepest truth of our life. In this masterfully crafted story, Jesus fulfills the things that he has predicted. In his last discourse (14:1-16:33) he promised a peace that the world cannot give, and the constant assistance of the Holy Spirit. Here, appearing to the Twelve for the first time after his resurrection, he gives them peace and the Holy Spirit. He also gives two things that were not foretold. Now that the Church has received the Spirit, he can teach things that had not been accessible before. Jesus gives the church a job: "As the Father has sent me, so I also send you." He also gives a grave authority, that of forgiving sins or of holding them bound. Keeping in mind that for John sin is virtually synonymous with unbelief, we may understand that our job is to invite the world into faith through credible word and action. We are the body of Christ. It is our job to give peace and forgiveness to the world. We could not do any of this, except in the Holy Spirit.

### **En Fuego**

Breath. Fire. Renewal. Gift. These words resonate off the pages of Sacred Scripture on Pentecost Sunday. In the Gospel, the walls of a locked room cannot stop Jesus from breathing the Holy Spirit on the apostles. Jesus literally "inspires" them with the Holy Spirit. He breathes out, and they breathe in and receive. This reception is followed by Pentecost in the Book of Acts. The Holy Spirit falls on the apostles as tongues of fire, and then they go and breathe that Spirit out through their words and actions. This is unprecedented! So much so, that the people listening to the disciples think they are drunk.

We receive this same Holy Spirit and can call on him to inspire us. It is the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to proclaim Christ to others and, as St. Paul reminds the Corinthians, it is only through the Holy Spirit that we can call Jesus our Lord at all. Our Faith is fully reliant on the Holy Spirit; not only does the Spirit renew us as a breath of fresh air, we can bring that Holy Spirit out to a world that desperately needs it; a world that is choking for lack of oxygen. Pentecost challenges us to be bold in that Spirit; the world cannot wait for us to act.