

John 20:19-23

In the evening of the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Unlike the Acts of the Apostles, St John reports that it was in the 'evening of the first day of the week', the day of resurrection, that the Risen Lord appeared to his disciples and 'breathed his Spirit' on them (Jn 20). We call to mind the story of creation, how the Creator breathed life into the first man (Gen 2:7). So now the Risen Christ, breathes on his disciples, giving them the Spirit of new life.

The Spirit doesn't just reveal and teach us about God's love, but it actually draws us into the cycle of the Father's love for the Son, and the Son's love for the Father. The Spirit enables the Father and the Son to come and live in us, and for us to live in God.

Let us welcome the Holy Spirit and rejoice in our new life in God.

***“In the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
there is the infinity of the eternal, the vision of
the image, the enjoyment of the gift”***

St Hilary

Pentecost Sunday

Year C

5th June 2022



Pentecost, as its very name suggests takes place 50 days after Easter and it is the crowning finale of the celebration of the Lord's resurrection. On Easter Sunday and throughout the season of Easter we have been continually proclaiming new life – resurrection! But on Pentecost, with the out pouring of God's Spirit, we can truly say that we now share in the Lord's resurrection. For at Pentecost the Spirit of the Living God comes down on us and just like a spark, sets us alight. The Spirit enables us not only to know God, but to enter into his life! St. Basil the Great, the 4th Century bishop & theologian, puts this beautifully when he says that *the Spirit enables us to dance with the angels... Not only do we acquire likeness to God, but most sublime of all, we ourselves, become divine.*

Opening Prayer

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.

Acts 2:1-11

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

As the name indicates, Pentecost is the feast that takes place 50 days after Easter. But Pentecost was also celebrated in the Old Testament among the Jewish people. It was called the feast of Harvest or the feast of Week's, and it celebrated the beginning of harvest, but it later came to signify the commemoration of all the covenants, beginning with Noah, to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. By emphasizing Pentecost, Luke clearly wants to show, that the out pouring of the Holy Spirit is the solemn promulgation of the New Covenant, the birth of the Church.

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

Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord God, how great you are,

How many are your works, O Lord! The earth is full of your riches.

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.

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.

1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13

No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

God's special gifts are given, through the power of the Holy spirit, for the benefit of others. That is what St Paul says when he lists examples of different gifts of the Holy Spirit and adds that "to each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." We might ask of ourselves, 'What gifts has God given me? Am I using these gifts for some service in the community?' Every day we can pray more and more for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit. Let us ask God our Father for an increase in our anointing.

Alleluia, alleluia! Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia!

(Gospel overleaf)

Prayer over the Offerings

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, as promised by your Son, the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly the hidden mystery of this sacrifice and graciously lead us into all truth.

Prayer after Communion

O God, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church, safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may retain all its force and that this spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption.