

Read

Acts of the Apostles

2:1-11

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30,
31, 34

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

John 20:19-23

Solemnity of Pentecost

May 31, 2020



REFLECTION

The late Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, csc, former president of the University of Notre Dame, often said the most important prayer someone could pray is simply: "Come, Holy Spirit." While intercessory in nature, this prayer is more than a calling upon the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is recognizing that the Holy Spirit permeates every element of our lives.

Jesus breathes on the disciples and gives the gift of the Holy Spirit. This imagery of breath for the Spirit pervades Scripture. This is especially significant as life cannot exist without breath. Breath is an inescapable reality, and the same is true for the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always with us.

When we say, "Come, Holy Spirit," we acknowledge the presence of the Spirit—the presence Living the Word of God. May we always strive to be ever more aware of this incredible presence.

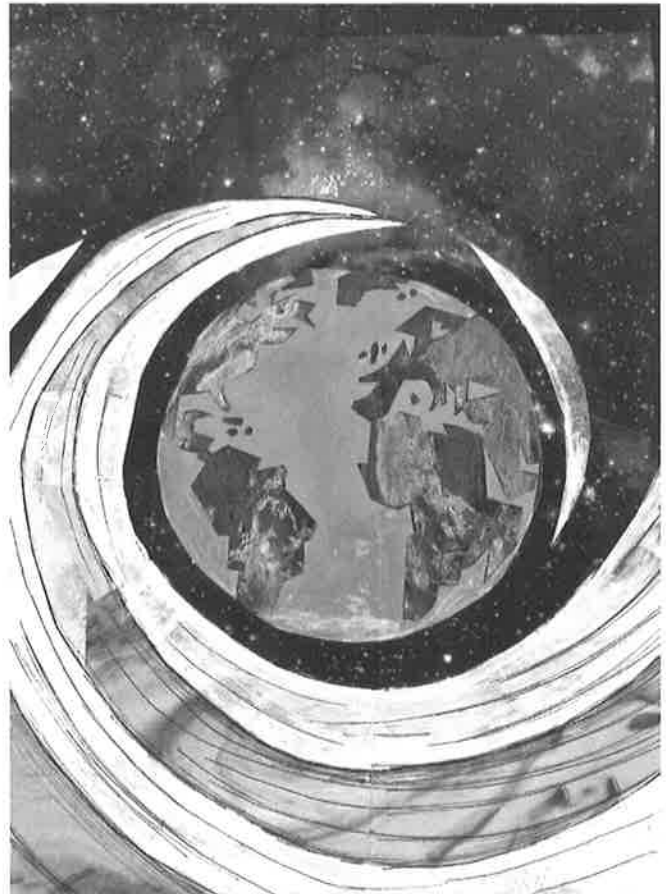
? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What do you remember about your Baptism and/or Confirmation? How can you recommit yourself to continually living the reality of the Spirit present in the Sacraments?
- ❖ What are some of the gifts of the Holy Spirit you are called to use? How do you use them?



ACTION

Take some time today and be mindful of your breathing. Close your eyes, quiet your mind, and take deep breaths. With each breath, recognize you are in the presence of God. Rest in this quiet of God's peace and love and acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit. After some time, bring to mind different images of the Holy Spirit you have encountered, such as fire, wind, or water. Think about how each of those images, like the image of breath, draw you deeper into the reality of God.





May 31, 2020

SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

LECTIONARY #63A

Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

John 20:19-23

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Today marks the conclusion of Easter Time. Although Pentecost can be challenging to some students who struggle to grasp the essence of the Holy Spirit, it is one of the most important days of the liturgical year, because the Holy Spirit is what guides and supports our ministry as disciples.

Q FOCUS: *Sense the Spirit!*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

Display the liturgical calendar and point out the Solemnity of Pentecost. Pentecost marks the end of Easter Time and the entrance into the longer segment of Ordinary Time, which lasts until the new liturgical year begins.

Church Teaching Connection

The gift of the Holy Spirit is what empowers the work of the Church in the world today. The Holy Spirit is the active person of the Trinity in these "last days" after Christ's time in the world (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 737-749).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:19-23

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Today's reading is from Pentecost—the day that we celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. On this holy day of the Church, we recall how the disciples were gifted with the guidance of the Holy Spirit as an aid to their ministry after Jesus' ascension into heaven. The Gospel reading recounts how that happened and it reveals a couple of important ideas to us.

► First of all, where were the disciples on this particular day?

They were hiding together with the doors locked, “for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19). At this point, Jesus has been crucified, and most of his followers had taken to hiding. To be clear, they were probably not being hunted down or actively searched for. But they knew that if they went out publicly proclaiming Christ's Word and ministering as they had been—even after his death—they would have been perceived as a threat by the chief priests. The disciples knew that to go out was to risk imprisonment or execution, so they hid together.

► What are some things that you are afraid of? Can you think of a time recently when you hid from something you were afraid of?

We can assume that the followers of Jesus were still praying and teaching one another, but at this point they had abandoned their public ministry. Suddenly, Jesus appeared in their midst, and they rejoiced. They went from being a group whose leader was just executed to a group whose leader *rose* from the dead! Not only did they get to witness the miracle of their friend and teacher overcoming death, they also thought that their fortunes were reversing from public shame into public victory.

Well, Jesus had other plans for the disciples than a victory parade. According to today's Scripture, Jesus instead tells them: “As the Father has sent me,

so I send you” (John 20:21). This might have been a bit of surprise for the disciples. Rather than celebrating the Resurrection, they are suddenly being sent out on assignment! Also, they are perhaps realizing that Jesus will not be there with them as they go out to minister. The fear of the Jewish leadership is something to worry about again. But Jesus doesn't just give them marching orders with no backup plan. He blesses them with the Holy Spirit—the third person of the Trinity who would remain with the disciples and with us as we continue to do Christ's work in the world.

► So, what is this Holy Spirit?

Unlike Jesus, we never truly “see” or “touch” the Spirit, but we do sense the work of the Spirit in our lives. A simple way to explain it is to say that anytime we attribute something in our world to God, we are referencing the work of the Holy Spirit. From simple acts of goodwill and selfless love by Christian people to counts of miracles, that is all the work of the Spirit in our lives.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 204.

Where do you see or have you seen the work of the Holy Spirit in your life or someone else's life?

Do you ever experience fear as the disciples did when it comes to being openly Christian? Why or why not?

Do you ever hide your Catholic identity because of concerns about what people think of you? If so, what would Jesus need to give you to help you get over that?

Act on the Word

Spirit Burning in Our Hearts

This activity ideally should be done outside using a fire in a fire pit or something similar, but can also be done indoors using a lit candle and flash paper. Give the students pens and either small scraps of white paper (for outdoors) or flash paper (for indoors) and ask them to write a prayer for the Holy Spirit's intercession, whether in their lives or the life of someone close to them, or in the world.

Say to teens: We often associate the Holy Spirit with fire. In the Pentecost story, the Spirit is said to have descended on the disciple in forms of tongues of flame. But fire is a good metaphor for the Spirit. Fire does not have a physical form. That is, fire is not an object; what we see as fire is the visible evidence of a chemical reaction. But we cannot actually pick up fire and hold it in our hand. The Holy Spirit is the same way—we can see evidence of its presence in our lives and in the world, but we cannot truly see or touch the Spirit directly. So, I invite each of you to step forward one at a time and offer your prayer aloud. After reading your prayer, place the written prayer in the fire (or candle flame). As the paper is consumed and appears to vanish, know that your prayer is being taken up by the Holy Spirit.

Note for teachers: It may be advisable to have a volunteer or staff member actually place the papers into the fire (or candle flame). Sometimes students can become distracted by the process of their peers attempting to get as close to the fire without getting burned.

Discerning the Spirit

Provide construction paper, scissors, glue, markers or crayons, and several copies of current magazines. It is particularly advisable to use Christian magazines like US Catholic, America, Commonweal, or Relevant.

Say to teens: Sometimes we may have trouble recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives or in the world. Using these magazines and construction paper, create a collage that demonstrates one way in which the Holy Spirit is active. Your collage can be centered on a theme, and you can write your own text, but do find at least one image or word or phrase from these magazines to demonstrate the Spirit's presence in our world.

Note for teachers: Allow for fifteen to twenty-five minutes for collaging to take place. You can choose to let students converse quietly while they do so or this can be done in silence. After collaging is complete, ask students to take turns showing and sharing their products with the group and ask them to explain their thinking/inspiration.

Closing Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, come.

Heal our wounds.

Heal our strength.

Bend the stubborn heart and will.

Guide the steps that go astray.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.