

Read

Acts 2:1-11

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

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

John 20:19-23

LIVING THE WORD

Solemnity of Pentecost

May 28, 2023



REFLECTION

Have you ever felt frozen by fear? At the beginning of the Pentecost Gospel reading, the disciples might as well be in prison. Their fear of arrest keeps them imprisoned; their fear of death keeps them from going out and living. So often, our fears are self-fulfilling. We are so afraid that someone else will take our life or our joy from us that we throw it away, just to feel a little bit safer and more in control. When Jesus comes to bring the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, everything changes. Peace comes, not from external circumstances—nothing has changed in the world outside—but from the Holy Spirit. The peace of the Spirit is something we can have for ourselves. It comes with a mission. As members of God's church, we are commissioned to carry his love and mercy out into the world!

ACTION

The disciples lock themselves away from danger, but despite all of their efforts, they are still afraid. Without peace, the upper room becomes a hiding place rather than a prayerful retreat. Do you feel called to do something that frightens you? Retreat into a quiet space to pray. Ask Jesus to breathe his peace upon you until your heart is still and quiet. Gently let the decision or action you have been considering rise up into that quiet space you are sharing with Jesus. As you consider each of your options, pay attention to the peace you are holding within you. How can you carry that peace into the world with your actions?



On your social media, post things that inspire you to be courageous and to be at peace (songs, movies, quotes, and the like). Maybe they will inspire someone else!

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ Why is forgiveness of sins such an important part of the mission of Christ and the Church?
- ❖ How does fear hold you back from acting on your values or doing the things that are meaningful to you?



May 28, 2023

SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

LECTIONARY #63A

Mass during the Day

Acts 2:1-11

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

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

Sequence: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*

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, we celebrate the important feast of Pentecost. Pentecost comes fifty days after the celebration of Easter and marks the end of Easter Time. It also marks the birthday of the Church! The Holy Spirit is not given to us once, but is present throughout our lives and in the life of the Church and draws us deeper to God. It gives us courage and peace. As we hear in today's Gospel reading, the disciples were locked in the Upper Room, scared that they would be persecuted by those who arrested and persecuted Jesus. But Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit onto the disciples so that they are strengthened in their faith.

Q FOCUS: *The Holy Spirit is moving throughout the world, the Church, and our lives.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On Monday, May 29, we celebrate the memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. Because she is the mother of Jesus and is one of his first disciples, she is considered the Mother of the Church. On May 31, we celebrate the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the day that we celebrate when Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, who had become pregnant in her old age with John the Baptist. The meeting between these two women

shows the Holy Spirit at work in their lives and the way God was working to redeem the world through the birth of Christ.

Church Teaching Connection

"When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth (see Jn 17:4) was completed, the holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost to sanctify the church continually and so that believers might have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit (see Eph 2:18). This is the Spirit of life. . . . The Spirit dwells in the church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple (see 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19)" (*Lumen gentium*, 4).

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:

► When you hear the term “Holy Spirit,” what comes to mind? What words, images, colors, or actions do you associate with the Holy Spirit?

Today, we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, fifty days after the celebration of Easter. Pentecost marks the end of the Easter season. Much of the Church is decorated in red, and the priest is wearing red vestments. We celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples. We hear about this gift being given in the upper room in the Gospel reading, but our first reading (Acts 2:1–11) tells the story of the Pentecost event, that occurred after Jesus’ ascension. Pentecost was a unique event and we often refer to it as the birthday of the Church, because it is that sending of the Spirit that enabled the apostles to spread the Good News to the whole world. This is a good reminder for us that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not a one-time gift.

We too have been given the gift of the Spirit in our own lives. The Holy Spirit strengthens us, gives us courage to live as Jesus did, the wisdom and knowledge to make good choices, and so many other things.

Throughout Easter Time, we have heard many Gospel stories about Jesus teaching his disciples, specifically preparing them for when he would no longer be with them. After Jesus’ resurrection, he continued to teach them, alleviate their fears, and give them courage.

► How can Jesus’ teachings or presence calm fears and give courage? What did this look like for the disciples? What might it look like in your life?

The disciples have been frightened, since the crucifixion. They are afraid that they too will be targeted and persecuted, possibly killed as Jesus was killed. Their views are not popular. Jesus doesn’t promise them that that will not happen; many of the early disciples were killed for their faith. Rather, Jesus promises that he will be with them, through the Spirit, as they proclaim his message of love, mercy, and peace to the world.

Jesus shares with them the gift of divine peace; this is not the peace of the world, but the peace of God. This gives them courage to take up his mission in the face persecution, because they rest in God and know that God is always with them.

The Trinity is present and active in the sacraments of the Church. The Holy Spirit inspires us to faith, it inspires us to seek out what God is offering in the sacraments so that we can enter into a deeper relationship with God. We usually think of confirmation as the sacrament of Spirit, because we hear a prayer during the liturgy for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is present in all other sacraments as well, sharing God’s grace with us in the sacramental context. All of them work together to help us live the Christian life and keep Christ’s peace in our hearts.

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 192.

Pentecost is the end of Easter Time, but it brought forth the beginning of the Church.

Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit onto the disciples so that they are strengthened in their faith.

The Holy Spirit is still active today, in the life of the Church and in our lives.

Act on the Word

Celebrating Pentecost

For this activity, you will need a variety of ethnic foods, hymns sung in languages other than English, drinks, plates, forks/spoons/napkins. See below for more instructions regarding food. You will also need a Bible.

Read aloud with the teens the story of Pentecost. This is found in Acts 2:1–11. An important part of the Pentecost story is that the gift of the Holy Spirit made it possible for the disciples to proclaim the Good News to speakers of many different languages. By being able to be understood in different languages, they were able to spread the word of God to people all over the world. This embodies the missionary spirit of the Church. Spend a few minutes talking with the teens about how our Church is a universal Church. Catholics live in every country, all over the world, and they speak every language. If any young person has experiences of celebrating Mass in a different language, in a different country, or in a different cultural context, invite them to share their experience.

Then, have a party! Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the Church. The Church grew exponentially that day. Acts 2:41 notes that about three thousand people became Christians on that Pentecost day because of Peter's preaching. Celebrate this and the multicultural reality of the Church today by having a party. You can include food, music, and possibly special guests. Ask the young people and their parents to provide a food that comes from their cultural background, or they might be assigned a country's cuisine. Be sure to have a sign that states from which country the food originates. Of course, do not forget to include any allergens as well. The food should be displayed on a large buffet table. During the celebration, play hymns that are sung in

languages other than English. Lastly, if possible, invite some parishioners to join you, specifically parishioners who are originally from another country or who speak more than English at their homes. Inviting other parishioners to the celebration will help build community as well.

You could even coordinate with the parish office and organize this event for the entire parish community, but be sure to have the teens play a role in planning, preparing, and hosting. If you coordinate this with the whole parish, invite parishioners who have different cultural backgrounds to help so that you can authentically represent and celebrate their traditions and foods.

Closing Prayer

*May your gift of the Spirit, O God,
continue to enflame our hearts,
that we might bring your peace and
justice to the whole world.
Instill in people of every language
and creed
a commitment to live justly
and a desire to be one with you and with
your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
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.