



# Bringing Home the Word

**Pentecost (A)**  
**May 31, 2020**

## Unity of Spirit

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

The whole group of believers was gathered with Mary, Jesus' Mother, in the upper room. They were waiting for power to be given to them from on high, as Jesus had promised. They were like children with their mother, keeping the family together. Being the one on earth closest to Jesus, Mary was the disciples' physical and spiritual connection to him, and they listened to her.

Consider what a colorful group the first Christians were. Each believer was different, each unique, each had his or her own background. Yet when the

Spirit called them together with Mary, there was a beautiful harmony and complementarity. Opposite of the spirit of the evil one, which causes division and exaggerates individuality, the Spirit of God celebrates legitimate diversity while creating from these different parts one body and one spirit in Christ.

If you have ever been in Rome for an audience with the pope on Wednesday morning or at a large papal Mass like World Youth Day, you have experienced how the Spirit brings unity amid diversity. These gatherings comprise thousands of people of many different nationalities and languages, but all are united in prayer and a common spirit. This is the miracle brought about by the Spirit.

It's not easy to maintain this unity. It requires we each listen to and strive for the unity Jesus asks of us. Selfish individualism is a constant tendency, but it's much easier to resist it when we are united by Mary and the Church to Christ's Spirit. +

## Sunday Readings

### Acts 2:1-11

Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and...Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire.

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

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.

### John 20:19-23

[Jesus] breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

***When the Spirit called the  
first Christians together,  
there was a beautiful  
harmony.***

## A Word from Pope Francis

As he did on Pentecost, the Lord wants to work one of the greatest miracles we can experience; he wants to turn your hands, my hands, our hands, into signs of reconciliation, of communion, of creation. He wants your hands to continue building the world of today. And he wants to build that world with you.

—Prayer vigil with young people,  
July 30, 2016



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## QUESTIONS REFLECTION

- How can I encourage greater unity within my family and parish?
- Is there a way I can be more of a team player?

# Reverencing the Bible

By Richard Rohr, OFM

Many of us have been privileged to be present with someone on his or her deathbed. In this setting we are concerned about listening to every word the person is saying—and about choosing our own words carefully. It is with this degree of reverence that we should approach the Bible: with humility.

Biblical language is more poetry than prose. It doesn't so much describe events historically as it seeks to lead us into those experiences. We can change words, but an experience changes us. Good biblical interpretation finds the balance between words that get us started, and encounters that are beyond words.

At the transfiguration (Matthew 17), Jesus appears to several disciples, his face shining "like the sun" and clothes "white as light." Afterward, Jesus cautions them: "Do not tell the vision...." In this example we observe the spiritual tradition balancing darkness and light, presence and absence, speaking and silence, seeing everything so well that we don't need to see anything in particular.

The Bible repeatedly finds the balance between knowing and not knowing, between using words and having humility about words. To read the Bible well, we should appreciate the

balance and allow the Spirit to stir its meaning for us. But for most of us in the contemporary West, it is an uphill struggle. We prefer to read the Bible literally and to turn to it for precise answers to questions.

## Need for Grounding

Ours is a time of such change that the human psyche struggles to handle it all. Terrorist attacks and political turmoil have shaken us deeply. No wonder many of us look to certitudes for grounding. Subconsciously, we seek to make God our private property by taking the Bible literally, reading it from our own perspective and cultural interpretation. When we do this, we lapse into a kind of rigid time capsule that does not enlighten us. God gives us just enough light for the next faith-filled step, never a blueprint for our lifetime.

The "Jesus Seminar" offers an example. Here scholars combed through New Testament texts in an effort to determine if Jesus said this or that and did or didn't use certain precise words. When we take that approach, more is lost than gained. We risk moving out of sacred space and trivializing what we might have experienced. We risk declaring victory before we have even struggled. We settle the dust by giving

ourselves answers, when the raised dust might have revealed the right questions.

## Journey of Faith

Though we often wish it were so, the biblical God is not a cure-all, a cosmic answer man or woman. The God living inside of history uses it and suffers from it, gives us truths on which we can rely. But he doesn't give us all the answers. In fact, God leads us through the dilemma of our lives and invites us into a daring journey of faith. God always comes to us disguised as our lives.

The Bible offers hope, but not an escape from life. It is in life that we meet God. So very little in life is ever resolved or solved, settled or answered. There is only the crisis itself, the struggle. Our need for an answer leads us toward eternal life. God calls us to stay in the struggle—still wanting to know, but as people of faith being willing not to know. All because we can trust the One who knows all. +



## WEEKDAY READINGS

June 1-6

**Monday**, Blessed Virgin Mary: Gn 3:9-15, 20 or Acts 1:12-14 / Jn 19:25-34

**Tuesday**, Weekday:  
2 Pt 3:12-15a, 17-18 / Mk 12:13-17

**Wednesday**, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions:  
2 Tm 1:1-3, 6-12 / Mk 12:18-27

**Thursday**, Weekday:  
2 Tm 2:8-15 / Mk 12:28-34

**Friday**, St. Boniface:  
2 Tm 3:10-17 / Mk 12:35-37

**Saturday**, Weekday:  
2 Tm 4:1-8 / Mk 12:38-44

# PRAYER

*Risen Lord, your Spirit fills the world with love and peace. Empower me to be an instrument of your peace, love, and forgiveness to all people.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

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