



Bringing Home the Word

Pentecost Sunday | June 4, 2017

Were They Still Afraid?

By Mary Katharine Deeley

People respond to fear in two instinctive ways: fight or flight. The disciples chose to flee—hiding in an upper room, waiting for the coast to clear. Of course they were afraid. Their teacher and Lord had been taken from them, and the religious authorities did not like them. Even though Jesus wanted them to go into the world, they didn't have the slightest idea what they would say and where they would go.

Jesus promised to send them an Advocate who would guide them and reveal the truth to them, but they didn't know what that would look like. And

into that locked room the Holy Spirit blew, bringing gifts of grace and strength they couldn't imagine.

Were they still afraid? Probably. Did they suddenly know what to do? Probably not. But they knew they could not be silent.

Something compelled them to go out, confident that they had a gift to share with the world. What they couldn't have realized was that the Spirit fell on the world that day as well—allowing those whose hearts were opened to hear the words of life preached by those who at one time didn't know what to say.

Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the Church. The Church remains what it was at the first—imperfect women and men gifted by the Spirit to speak the good news to other imperfect women and men who have been gifted to hear it.

The Spirit blows through the world even now—the presence of God, our Advocate, who invites us to proclaim Christ to all and gives us the grace to do so. †

“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.”
1 Corinthians 12:12

A Word From Pope Francis

Dear friends, Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us! How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!

—Homily, conferral of the sacrament of confirmation, April 28, 2013



Sunday Readings

Acts 2:1–11

“And they were all filled with the holy Spirit.”

1 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13

“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, ...and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.”

John 20:19–23

“[Jesus] said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’”

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

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



Transformed by Easter

By Richard Rohr, OFM

Christian history reaches its crescendo point in the resurrection of Jesus.

The risen Jesus is the final revelation of the heart of God—a God who teaches love rather than hate, forgiveness rather than blame, nonviolence rather than violence.

Recall Jesus' encounters with his disciples after his resurrection. He comes to the circle of followers with whom he had spent three years. These people, who

were closest to him, had nevertheless rejected, betrayed, and abandoned him. Following his resurrection, Jesus has the opportunity to chastise them. And yet in all four Gospel accounts of the risen Christ we see that Jesus neither berates nor blames his disciples. Indeed, Peter, who had betrayed him three times, is given three chances to say to his master, "I love you."

There is nothing to be afraid of in the risen Jesus. We have in him the perfect icon of a God who is safe and a universe

that is safe. We have a God who does not blame, does not punish, does not threaten, does not dominate. We have a God who breathes forgiveness. The whole biblical tradition has been moving to this moment where God is identified with universal forgiveness.

Once we have a personal experience in our own life of the risen Christ upholding us, naming us, loving us, freeing us, then we have nothing to fear. That's how secure Christ makes us—because we have a reference point, we have a center point. We have received the gift of the Spirit. †

Source: *Everyday Catholic*,
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Pentecost People

By Judith Dunlap

We are a Pentecost people. Like the first disciples, we are gifted with the Holy Spirit so that we can share our faith with others. This is not always easy. Many of us were raised to believe that religion is a private matter. It can be difficult for us to talk about God or our faith. And yet, faith-sharing in families is crucial.

We live in a culture that in many ways no longer supports Judeo-Christian values. Thus, young people need to hear and see the people most important to them talking about and living the gospel message. If faith is going to be real in their lives, they need to see that faith is real in the lives of those closest to them.

Celebrate Pentecost this year with your family by reading or retelling the story from Acts 2:1–13. Talk about how you would have felt if you were in the upper room, and invite other family members to do the same. Discuss the Holy Spirit in your own life. How have you experienced the gifts of courage and understanding? When have you felt the Spirit's fruits of joy and peace? Finally, have fun with the symbols of fire and wind. Weather permitting, spend the afternoon flying a kite. Put together a wind chime. Have a special dinner with lots of candles. Talk about why you think fire and wind are symbols of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is the day the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to leave the safety of the upper room and share their faith with a city of strangers. Why not take the risk this Pentecost and share

your faith with those closest to you? If you were one of the disciples on that first Christian Pentecost, what would you have wanted to share about your faith? Trust in the Spirit. Like those early disciples, you may be astonished at the results. †

Source: *Everyday Catholic*,
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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 Day of Easter Through Pentecost*
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 5–10

Mon. St. Boniface:
Tb 1:3; 2:1b–8 / Mk 12:1–12
Tue. Weekday:
Tb 2:9–14 / Mk 12:13–17
Wed. Weekday:
Tb 3:1–11a, 16–17a / Mk 12:18–27

Thu. Weekday:
Tb 6:10–11; 7:1bcde, 9–17; 8:4–9a / Mk 12:28–34
Fri. Weekday:
Tb 11:5–17 / Mk 12:35–37
Sat. Weekday:
Tb 12:1, 5–15, 20 / Mk 12:38–44

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