

## SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

### BEING COURAGEOUS

Jn 20:19-23

In the Gospel today we heard that the disciples were hiding and that they were very afraid. Can anyone tell me why? Because they were being persecuted by the Jews. But thank God Christians are no longer being persecuted. I wish that was true.

Recently there was an attack on a busload of Christians on a pilgrimage in Egypt. According to the chaplain of the group, Father Rashed: **“as each pilgrim came off the bus they were asked to renounce their Christian faith and profess belief in Islam, but all of them—even the children—refused. Each was killed in cold blood with a gunshot to the head or the throat.”** Another Priest says that Egypt’s Christians feel they could be martyrs at any time.

But all of this violence against Christians should not come as a surprise. Jesus predicted it was going to be like that. He says: **“You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”** (Mt 10:22)

So the question is how can we stand firm? How can children have the courage to sacrifice their lives for their faith? The answer is very simple. The Holy Spirit. What are we celebrating today? Pentecost.

But what is courage? The quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., with confidence and resolution.

We might not have to shed our blood for our faith like so many Christians around the world, but everyday we are faced with so many situations in which we need courage. I'll give you a few examples:

Many elderly who feel useless and lonely.

Many young people who try to be faithful to their Christian values but face so many temptations.

Many couples who are struggling in their marriage and are trying very hard to save their marriage but sometimes they just want to give up.

Many people who are sick and in so much pain that they have doubted about God.

There are so many examples but the most important thing is to remember this:

Courage is not the absence of fear. It is the ability to face a situation despite our fears. Who gives us that ability? The Holy Spirit.

So how courageous are you? Well, that depends on how you answer the next question:

How often do you pray to the Holy Spirit?

St Frances  
6-4-17