

June 5, 2022

Pentecost Sunday

There are three possible gospel readings for the feast of Pentecost. There is one for the vigil mass, John 7:37-39, and two options for the Sunday mass: either John 14:15-16, 23b-26 or John 20:19-23.

John 7:37-39

On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. As scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him who believes in me.'" He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

John 14:15-16, 23b-26.

Jesus said to the disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always. "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. "I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name--he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.

John 20:19-23

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."

Background:

There are scripture texts that are associated with the feast of Pentecost which are very different from each other. Luke in Acts of the Apostles described the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in cosmic signs of wind and fire (Acts 2:1-11). (This will be the first reading for those who attend Mass on Sunday.) In this account, Jesus has already ascended into heaven and the disciples have elected a replacement for Judas. When the Holy Spirit descends, it seems to energize the disciples so that they can go out and begin to be effective witnesses to others.

The third possible gospel for this feast, the one from John 20, is the one most frequently chosen for Sunday, and is the one likely to be heard by most US Catholics this Sunday. It is from John's gospel, and it presents another expression of the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples. Here Jesus breathes on them a new breath of life. In this version, the presence of the Holy Spirit seems to bring them peace, and they are commissioned to forgive sins.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you experience the presence of the Holy Spirit in your own life? Have there been times when the Holy Spirit seems to be present in dramatic or cosmic ways? Are there also times when the Holy Spirit is present in the very breath of your life?
2. Do you personally prefer to think of the Spirit as present in one of these ways more so than the other? Do you know people who feel differently than you?
3. Rather than looking at the descriptions of the Holy Spirit coming upon the community as being separate and somewhat opposing views, what happens if you look at them as different expressions of the same event? What happens to your understanding of the Holy Spirit's presence in the early disciples, and in the life of the church today, and in your life?

4. In the third gospel text (John 20:19-23), why do you think Jesus says, “whose sins you retain are retained.” Isn’t that presumed when he says, “whose sins you forgive are forgiven them?”
5. Is it possible that one of the reasons we do not experience the power of God in our lives is that we have not exercised the power given us to forgive others?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for Pentecost Sunday – June 5, 2022 – Mass during the Day
There are options for both the second reading and the gospel.

Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house. There appeared tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them. There were devout Jews from every nation staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

*Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. Bless the Lord, O my soul!
You are great indeed! How manifold are your works, O Lord! the earth is full of your creatures;
May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord be glad in his works!
If you take away their breath, they perish and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.*

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; the same God produces all of them in everyone. To each the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Or: Brothers and sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever has the Spirit of Christ belongs to him. If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is alive. Consequently, we are not to live according to the flesh. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" We are children of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

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." Then 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."

Or: Jesus said: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always. "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will make our dwelling with him.

The word you hear is not mine, but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

Excerpts: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104:1-34; 1 Cor 12:3-13; Romans 8:8-17; John 20:19-23; John 14:15-26

From Joe:

Friends,

Here are the gospel background and reflection questions for June 5th, which is Pentecost Sunday, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. All three of the Pentecost gospel options are from John. In the one from John 7 for the Vigil, Jesus refers early in John's gospel to the coming of the Spirit which would happen later: "Scripture says, "Rivers of living water will flow from within him who believes in me." He said this in reference to the spirit they were to receive." In the Sunday option from John 14: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you an Advocate to be with you always. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you." In the most frequently used Sunday option, from John 20, when Jesus appeared to his disciples in the locked upper room: "He showed them his hands and his side, and he said to them, 'Peace be with you.' Then he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" The other readings also have references to the sending of the Spirit, the coming of the Spirit, and the presence of the Spirit. In the first reading, once more from the Acts of the Apostles, "They were all in one place, there was a noise like a strong wind, tongues as of fire parted and came to rest on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." Psalm 104 proclaims, "Lord, when you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." There are two options for the second reading. In the one from 1 Corinthians, Paul writes, "There are different spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit. To each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." In the option from Romans, "You are in the Spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. The one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to you also, through his Spirit that dwells in you."

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!