



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



PENTECOST SUNDAY, CYCLE A

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“...he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” John 20:22

How did the Gift of the Holy Spirit affect the nascent Jesus Movement on the feast of Pentecost, and, subsequently, the world? In John 14:16 Jesus told his disciples “...I will ask the Father, and he will give you an Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth...” On Pentecost, he grants the world the gift of what he promised. This past Lent the Church updated the priest’s *Prayer of Absolution* to better align with Jesus’ words, “Through the death and resurrection of his son has reconciled the world to himself and poured out the Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins...”

This *outpouring* has affected Christians of every generation down to the present age. In liturgical terms, the ordained priest *in persona Christi capitis*, as *Christ the Head of the Church*, asks the Holy Spirit in *epiclesis* to come down and hover over and around us, infusing the spirit within us, and animating us toward a right-ordered purpose driven life, for ‘*In him we live and move and have our being.*’ (Acts 17:28) This *epiclesis* is made manifest not once, but twice in every Eucharistic Prayer. A good example is evident in the words of Eucharistic Prayer II, first, over the bread and wine, then over the people. “*Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall...*” The priest then prays a second *epiclesis* over the people, “*Humbly we pray that, partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, we may be gathered into one by the Holy Spirit.*” In a perfect Trinitarian action, we are spiritually illuminated, “*I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you.*” John 14:20

The Holy Spirit infuses us with grace to interiorly animate our mystical life by reconciling us with each other as we prepare for mystical union with God. The Holy Spirit gives us the Seven Gifts to make possible this perfect union: Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Wonder and Awe.

Knowledge is the Word emanating from Sacred Scripture; *Understanding* is the intuitive perception and insight into a deeper reality we receive after reflecting on the Word; *Wisdom* is the infusion of grace to see with our spiritual senses; *Counsel* is the Holy Spirit perfecting our discernment for a right-ordered life; *Fortitude* allows us to pour ourselves out like a libation to the world, without considering the cost, even to the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom. (see 2 Timothy 4:6) *Piety* is the spontaneous and intentional gratitude we, in turn, pour out every day in every way toward God. And *Wonder and Awe* is the raising of our consciousness from the slavish bond of mortal time to a Kairos moment experienced in the Heavenly Jerusalem. In this moment outside of time we celebrate His Mystical Body as we are given an inexpressible vision of union with the Trinity and all who are created, past, present and future, in the *Imago Dei*, Image of God. “*The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit of God dwelling within us.*” Rom 5:5

As we reflect this week on the *Spirit of Truth* bestowed on us, consider St Paul’s words in Philippians 1:6, “*I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work in you will continue to complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*”

Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth! (Ps 104)

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John

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."*

The Gospel of the Lord

