

Sunday, 23th May 2010 - *Pentecost Sunday*

“Receive the Holy Spirit”

Reading 1: Acts 2:1-11

Responsorial Psalm Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Reading 2: 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

Gospel : John 20 : 19 - 23

Gospel Reading: *John 20:19-23*

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Meditation:

After his death and resurrection Jesus promised his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew his disciples would need the power of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission entrusted to them. The gift of the Holy Spirit was conditional upon the ascension of Jesus to the right hand of the Father. That is why Jesus instructed the apostles to *wait in Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high* (Luke 24:49). Why did they need *power from on high*? Just as Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at the beginning of his ministry at the River Jordan, so the disciples needed the anointing of the Spirit to carry out the mission entrusted to them by Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given to all who are baptized into Christ to enable us to live a new way of life – a life of love, peace, joy, and righteousness (Romans 14:17). The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love of God (Romans 5:7) and he gives us the strength and courage we need in order to live as faith-filled disciples of Jesus. The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:26) and enables us to grow in spiritual freedom (2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:21). The Spirit instructs us in the ways of God, and guides us in living according to God's will. The Spirit is the source and giver of all holiness. Isaiah foretold the seven-fold gifts that the Spirit would give: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (Isaiah 11:2).

The gift at Pentecost, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual gifts and blessings of God are made possible through the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. Just as God breathed life into Adam, so the gift of the Holy Spirit is an impartation of "new life" for his people. With the gift of the Holy Spirit a new creation begins. God recreates us for his glory. Do you want power to live a faith-filled life as a disciple of Jesus? Ask the Father to fill you with the power of his Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

St. Basil the Great, a fourth century church father, wrote on the work of the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit restores paradise to us and the way to heaven and adoption as children of God; he instills confidence that we may call God truly Father and grants us the grace of Christ to be children of the light and to enjoy eternal glory. In a word, he bestows the fullness of blessings in this world and the next; for we may contemplate now in the mirror of faith the promised things we shall someday enjoy. If this is the foretaste, what must the reality be? If these are the first fruits, what must be the harvest?" (From the treatise, *The Holy Spirit*) Do you thirst for God and for the life of the Spirit within you?

Questions for Community Faith Sharing:

Who is the Holy Spirit to you?

How important is the Holy Spirit in your life? Why?

What does the Holy Spirit give you?

Do you know and have you used the gift and power of the Holy Spirit in your life?

"Lord Jesus, I thank you for the gift of Pentecost and for new life in the Holy Spirit. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and set my heart ablaze with the fire of your love that I may serve you in joy and freedom."