

Pentecost Sunday
"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit!"

Reading 1: Acts 2: 1 – 11

Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 12: 3 – 7, 12 – 13

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

Gospel

: John 20: 19 - 23

Gospel Reading: *John 20:19-23*

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: In the beginning, "the Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being" The breath of the Father gives life where previously there was no life. After his death and resurrection Jesus promised to give his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit. He said to them, *Receive the Holy Spirit!* Jesus knew that 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*. Why did they need *power from on high*? The Gospels tell us that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit when he was baptized at the Jordan River:

"And John bore witness, 'I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him... this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'."

"And Jesus, *full of the Holy Spirit*, returned from the Jordan, and was *led by the Spirit* for forty days in the wilderness... and Jesus returned in the *power of the Spirit* into Galilee".

Just as Jesus was anointed with the Spirit at the beginning of his ministry, so the disciples needed the anointing of the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission entrusted to them by Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given to all who are baptized into Jesus Christ to enable us to live a new way of life - a life of love, peace, joy, and righteousness. The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love of God, and he gives us the strength and courage we need in order to live as faith-filled disciples of the Lord Jesus. The Spirit helps us in our weakness, and enables us to grow in spiritual freedom - freedom from doubt, fear, and from slavery to our unruly desires. 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.

The gift of 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. After his resurrection Jesus "breathed" on his disciples and gave them the Holy Spirit. 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. Jesus' gift of peace to his disciples was more than an absence of trouble. His peace included the forgiveness of sins and the fullness of everything good. 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.

The Lord Jesus offers each one of us the gift and power of his Holy Spirit. He wants to make our faith strong, give us hope that endures, and a love that never grows cold. He never refuses to give his Spirit to those who ask with expectant faith. Jesus instructed his disciples to ask confidently for the gift of the Spirit: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Question for Community Faith Sharing:

1. Do you thirst for God and for the abundant life he offers through the gift of his Spirit?
2. Do you know and experience in your own life the gift and power of the Holy Spirit?

"Lord Jesus, I thank you for the gift of Pentecost and for the new life you offer 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."