

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

R¹. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

R². Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 14:15-16, 23b-26; L63C

Jesus said to his 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.

Those who do not love me do 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 whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

or John 20:19-23

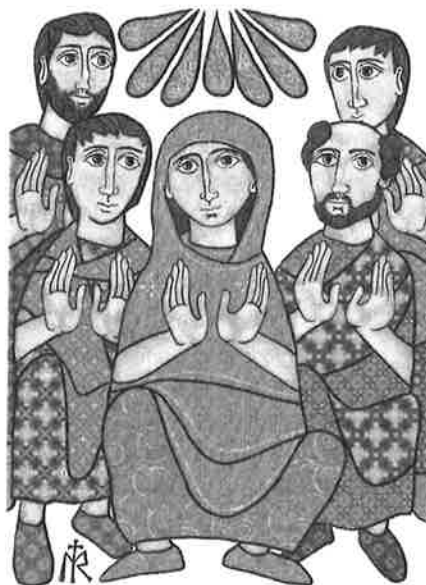
On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
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.”

Reflecting on the Gospel

The Holy Spirit is described as the Comforter or Paraclete, which translates from the Greek as Helper or Advocate. Earlier in John’s gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that he will leave them, but that the Father will send them another Advocate, one that will teach them everything and remind them of all they

have been taught (John 14:26). This Advocate that will come to them is “the Spirit of truth” who will be with them always (John 14:16-17). As the third person of the Holy Trinity, one way the Holy Spirit may be understood is as the active presence of God that enacts the will of God. In Genesis as the world was formed, we are told that a mighty wind swept over the waters before God spoke light into existence. With the Word, creation came into being, and God’s Spirit caused it to be so.

It could be argued that the presence or the anointing of the Holy Spirit is an essential ingredient at the beginning of ministry and for its success. In John’s gospel, before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist testifies, “I saw the



Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him” (John 1:32). This confirmed for John that the one he just baptized was indeed the prophesized Son of God, the one whom John heralded. Luke’s gospel gives the account of Jesus announcing to those gathered in the synagogue the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, / because he has anointed me . . .” (Luke 4:18). This, after he was tempted in the desert by the devil. Luke informs us that not only was Jesus filled with the Spirit (through baptism) but he was also in the *power* of the Spirit: filled with the indwelling power of the Spirit and anointed. To anoint is to confer a special and specific designation, one that denotes separation and is intended for use that is holy. While one is typically anointed with oil, to be anointed with the Spirit is particular, indeed, and implies a designation and capacity that comes from God.

Just as Jesus began his public ministry after being imbued (filled) with the power of the Spirit, the disciples, newly reconstituted as twelve, were told to journey to Jerusalem where they would receive “power” when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Now that Jesus had physically departed, it was important that the disciples receive the power of the Holy Spirit as they began public ministry in Jesus’s stead. Of course, as conveyed in the first reading, the Spirit of God was poured out on all who were present on the day of Pentecost, for in Scripture we see the physical manifestation of the Spirit as wind or breath, fire, and a dove.

We, too, are “sealed” with the Spirit through the sacrament of confirmation, which prepares and strengthens us for ministry, our service to the Body of Christ. Pentecost is often viewed as the birth of the church. Jesus empowered the disciples to continue his work when he breathed on them and empowered

them. Our bodies are even temples of the Holy Spirit, according to St. Paul. Pentecost Sunday serves as a reminder of the gift of God's Spirit, bestowed so that we may have power for service and guidance from the Advocate who will remind us of all truth and be with us always.

Focusing the Gospel

Key words and phrases: "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'"

To the point: This week's gospel reminds us of the gift we received in a special way at confirmation that we continue to receive anytime we pray, "Come, Holy Spirit." The presence of God on earth exists in a concrete and specific way in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes upon the apostles right after Jesus says, "Peace be with you." It is through the Holy Spirit that we do find peace.

Connecting the Gospel

to the first reading: The first reading this week is a manifestation of Christ's salvation intended for all nations. When the apostles receive the Holy Spirit, the first result of this new grace is their ability to speak with people from all over the world. The initial grace experienced by receiving the Holy Spirit is communication. It isn't power; it isn't humility; it's an opportunity to engage with people from every culture and ethnic background. This is the beginning of the universal church.

to experience: What does it mean that the first act of the Holy Spirit after being made manifest to the apostles is the gift of tongues? This should inform our call to personal ministry. No matter what our gifts are, whether they be words, presence, or deeds, we should always remember that the primary work of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is to get Christ's message out to everyone.

Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

to the readings: What does the Holy Spirit do? Renew the face of the earth. Think about this word: "renew," or to make new again. Jesus died, and has been made new through the resurrection. The coming of the Holy Spirit is the earth's opportunity to be made new, through the work of those guided by the Holy Spirit. "When you send forth your spirit, they are created, / and you renew the face of the earth."

to psalmist preparation: What in your own life needs to be made new again? Is there a relationship or area of discipleship where you can bring this sentiment of renewal forward? How can you spend time this week allowing for renewal of your own faith? Bring all of this with you when you proclaim these words.

PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING

What is one area of your life that can benefit from intentional renewal?

How do you work to bring Christ's message to those who "speak a different language" than you, perhaps in politics or career? How do you engage those who are different from you?

Knowing that the first act of the Holy Spirit when sent to the apostles is the work of communication, how can you renew the way you speak with family, friends, and colleagues?

Have you ever gone to Mass in another country and heard the words you know so well spoken in a different language? What was this experience like?

