

Sunday Message

PENTECOST SUNDAY

THE WORD

Year C • 8 June 2025 • Psalter Week 2

GOD'S FREE GIFT

JOHN 14:15-16, 23-26



Jesus promised his disciples that he would send his Holy Spirit after he had returned to his Father. In today's readings we hear how that promise was fulfilled. The Holy Spirit was given freely and the results were spectacular. The disciples began to speak in foreign tongues about the marvels of God.

Because the Holy Spirit is a free gift we might be inclined to show little appreciation. Perhaps we rarely even recognise the Spirit's presence in our lives. But imagine if we did begin to recognise the Spirit's presence in us, if we were enlivened by it, set on fire by it. What different people we would be. And what a different world we would have. ■

REFLECT

After the passion and death of Jesus, the apostles cowered behind locked doors, full of fear. Their fear had cut them off from the world. Then Jesus appeared in their midst, and their fear turned to joy.

Jesus breathed on them, breathed the breath of God on them, filled them with his life, with God's life – with confidence, hope, conviction, power. They became new people, ready to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth, even to die for it.

That same gift of the Holy Spirit that was poured out on the apostles at Pentecost is given to us, too. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is courage. The Spirit gives us the courage to follow Jesus whatever the cost.

American Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister says our model must be both Jesus the healer and Jesus the prophet. The popular embrace of Jesus the healer, she says, has obscured the more radical Jesus, who challenged the status quo and religious leaders of his time. "We live in an era that accepts half of what it means to follow Jesus," she says. We neglect the prophetic dimension.

Chittister wrote her book, *The Time is Now*, she says, "because I could not bear the roar of the silence any longer". She warns we are at a time when huge choices must be made that will determine the future of the world.

Choice takes three forms, she writes. The first is avoidance and to withdraw from the fray. The second is submission and passive acceptance, to keep our head down and "become part of the great enabling silence". The third is to be prophetic. "This prophetic choice says 'no' to anything that ignores the will of God or God's creation." We must always follow the prophetic path, she says.

It's difficult to do that today. Many people don't want to hear from us. We can be tempted to stay silent, afraid to raise our heads, comfortable only in the safe spaces. But we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. And filled with the Holy Spirit, we need not be afraid; there is nothing we can't do. ■

SAY

"Lord, forgive me for the times I have lacked the courage to put you first. Amen."

PRAY

Pray that you will have the courage to witness to the Gospel every day.

DO

Think about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Do you know them? Do you use them?

LEARN

In the 790s/early 800s, Charles, King of the Franks (better known as Charlemagne), was at the height of his powers. Regarded by many historians as the "Father of Europe", Charles had been steadily adding to his kingdom, extending it across most of France into northern Italy, Germany and Bohemia. Charlemagne's reign was marked by political and social changes that had lasting influence on Europe throughout the Middle Ages. He was also a key supporter of the papacy, and in the year 800 was crowned emperor in Rome by Pope Leo III.

So one might wonder why this great political and military leader with so much on his plate would also concern himself with a theological dispute to do with the Holy Spirit, known as the Filioque controversy. This was a debate between Western and Eastern Christianity over the addition of the words "and the Son" to a clause of the Nicene Creed. (The word "Filioque" means "and the Son".) While the original Creed professed the Holy Spirit as proceeding "from the Father", the Filioque altered this to "from the Father and the Son".

The Eastern (Orthodox) Church sharply disagreed with the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not from the Father alone – as earlier Church Fathers had taught – but from both the Father and the Son, because it made the Son equal with the Father. Instead, the Orthodox preferred the expression "from the Father through the Son". The dispute was one of the reasons for the split between Western and Eastern Christianity which endures to this day.

Charlemagne believed that the Filioque was the authentic version of the Creed and strongly promoted it throughout his empire. At the Synod of Aachen in 809, he petitioned Pope Leo III to have the clause accepted throughout the universal Church. Though he personally supported the Filioque, Leo declined in order to avoid a schism with the East. In 1014, however, the Filioque was formally accepted by the Vatican and has been part of the Creed in the Catholic Church ever since.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world
and that which contains all things
understands what is said, alleluia.*

Or

*The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Spirit of God dwelling within us, alleluia.*

COLLECT

O God, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 2:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the Apostles were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians – we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.'

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 104(103):1ab, 24ac, 29b-30, 31, 34. R. cf. 30

*R: Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face
of the earth.*

Or *Alleluia.*

1. Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD my God, how great you are!
How many are your works, O LORD!
The earth is full of your creatures. *R.*
2. You take away their breath, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, and they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth. *R.*
3. May the glory of the LORD last for ever!
May the LORD rejoice in his works!
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.
I will rejoice in the LORD. *R.*

SECOND READING Romans 8:8-17

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Brothers and sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please

God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL

R: Alleluia, alleluia.

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

R: Alleluia.

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

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

At that time: 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 Helper, to be with you for ever. If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.'

'These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, as promised by your Son,
the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly
the hidden mystery of this sacrifice
and graciously lead us into all truth.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*They were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church, safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given, that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her may retain all its force and that this spiritual food may gain her abundance of eternal redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.