

Pentecost Sunday (A)
Come, O Holy Spirit, Renew the Face of the Earth!

Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104:1,24,29-30,31,34; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

"Receive the Holy Spirit!" (Jn. 20:22).

These are the words our Lord Jesus spoke to the fearful disciples,
and they are meant for all of us living in this troubled and fractured world.

Today, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, a significant and extraordinary event in our faith. After the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, something extraordinary happened in world history. The risen Lord offered the gift of peace and breathed his Spirit upon the fearful, devastated, and troubled disciples (cf. Jn 20:21-22). This act of breathing recalls the breath that gave life when God created the world. In the creation story from the Book of Genesis, God breathed his Spirit, and new life began (cf. Gen 1:1-31).

The breath of Jesus at Pentecost refashioned the disciples, who were scared and hiding, into a new creation and humanity. By breathing the Spirit upon them, the risen Lord configured them into his mystical body and mind, extended in space and time, thereby giving birth to a new Church. Pentecost, therefore, celebrates the Church's birthday, the Body of Christ.

But let's keep in mind that this is not just a special event from the past; it continues to happen in our lives as Christians. We cannot be Christians or live as Christians without the Holy Spirit, just as we can't live without breathing. The Holy Spirit is present as "best of comforters, welcome guest of our soul, sweet refreshment, rest in our toil, cool in the heat, relief to our pain" (Sequence). Our Lord Jesus sometimes called the Holy Spirit our advocate, the one "called to our side" to help us stand up - - as conscience, as repentance, as a way back to God, as an inner moral compass, as an urge to pray, as the desire to forgive, as a concern for someone who has experienced tragedy, as outrage against injustice, and as direction for the future.

St. Paul said, "There are different types of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; different ways to serve but the same Lord; different works but the same God who gives them to everyone. Each person receives the Spirit in their own way for some good" (1 Cor 12:3-7). With these gifts and the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit, we are sent forth by our Lord Jesus to go, "as the Father has sent me, so I send you" (Jn. 20:21).

The gifts we receive from the Holy Spirit were never given for private comfort but for public mission. Therefore, our church, particularly through the Holy Eucharist, is not a "parking lot" of believers; it is a launching pad for witnesses. The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses, not spectators. Hence, society is transformed not merely by churchgoers but by those who live out the Holy Eucharist.

Often, we think of the Holy Spirit as bestowing amazing gifts such as healing, speaking in other languages, or prophecy. While it's good to ask for these gifts, it's also good to seek everyday gifts that help us connect with others and stay grounded. Remember, our patron, St. Therese of the Child Jesus, taught us that we can grow in holiness through simple acts of charity. She taught her "little ways," small acts of kindness done with great love.

This means the Holy Spirit is with us every day -- when we pray; when we make good choices; when we keep our promises; when we see God's greatness in the world; when we seek to understand

others; when we recognize a sinner's worth; when we unite rather than divide; and when we show courage by living the Gospel.

These are simple, daily gifts of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul said, "There are different types of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; different ways to serve but the same Lord; different works but the same God who gives them to everyone. Each person receives the Spirit in their own way for some good" (1 Cor 12:3-7).

Growing in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and living in the Holy Spirit requires deepening our prayer life. Remember, before the ascension of our Lord Jesus, he told the disciples to go to Galilee and wait for him there. Indeed, they waited, and the Holy Spirit came upon them as they prayed.

Discernibly, waiting in prayer deepened our longing and joyful anticipation for the gift of God himself through the Holy Spirit. In prayer, we take on the breath of God and allow his breath to form us. Without an attitude of prayerfulness and receptiveness, it is difficult to discover our unique talents and the particular role we are called to play in the Church's mission.

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you," says the Lord (Jn. 20:21).

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