

# Wellspring Fransalian Center for Spirituality

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Brothers and Sisters,

Today, we celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Jesus had assured his disciples that He would send His gift of the Spirit from the Father to be their comforter and advocate and that this Holy Spirit would do many things for them that they themselves would be unable to do. Just as he had promised, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples and filled them with new power. They were no longer afraid. They spoke boldly and moved with courage and compassion to bring the good news of Jesus to the world.

Our first reading today, from the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-11) tells us that the disciples experienced a new courage, a harmony, a unity, and a fellowship that they had never dreamed of! They were from different territories, they were of different backgrounds, and they spoke different languages. But they understood each other! The disharmony, the disunity and the brokenness and confusion that people experienced at Babel was reversed...at Babel they began to speak many languages and they could not understand each other anymore...at Pentecost, they spoke different languages and they understood each other...the Holy Spirit brought about a communion of cultures and peoples.

I remember an interesting story about the nature of the Holy Spirit. A little girl had gone to Sunday School. On her return, her mother asked her what she learned in Sunday School. "We learned about the "Holy Quilt," said the little girl. "Holy Quilt! What does that mean?" the mother exclaimed. When the girl explained what she learned, the mother realized that the girl had just got the words confused. The words were "Holy Comforter" and not "Holy Quilt." The Holy Spirit is the comforter because he comes with courage and makes us comfortable, free, and unafraid. The word comfort comes from Latin, "cum and fortis" (with + courage). The Holy Spirit came with courage and empowered the disciples to go out and proclaim the Gospel.

Even the idea of a "Hoy Quilt" gives us good insight into the very nature and work of the Holy Spirit. With a classic quilt, the top layer is made of different pieces of fabric sewn together in either a grid or a more complex design in many delightful colors and sizes and shapes. The Holy spirit holds us all together, people of different colors, cultures and nationalities and forms us into one body, the body of Christ – in beautiful colors, shapes, and sizes. The Church is in a sense a "Holy Quilt" - people of different backgrounds, colors, cultures, languages, sizes, and shapes formed and transformed by the Holy Spirit into one body, the Body of Christ.

We are now living in a world where such unity doesn't exist. We live in a broken world in urgent need of healing and wholeness. Nations are at odds with each other. Ideologies, philosophies and theologies seem to keep people apart. Such disunity is found even in religious circles. The word religion comes from Latin - "Re" means again and "ligare" means bind...to bind again. Religion that is supposed to be a binding and unifying force has become a dividing force even in our Catholic Church. Differences in theological positions, liturgical practices, worship forms, rituals, pastoral approaches, spiritual practices, etc. have become sources of conflict rather than resources for the growth of the Church. Our Church is alive and vibrant only when we experience what the early Christians experienced at Pentecost – unity in diversity, communion of cultures, respect for differences and listening and responding to the inspirations, movements and promptings of the Holy Spirit.

It is of utmost importance and urgency now for all of us to stop, be still, listen and pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance and new directions as it happened at Pentecost. We must pray for healing of brokenness, communion of cultures, respect for differences, unity in diversity and courage to change what must be changed. In our second reading of today's mass, we read Paul's description of the community as one, unified, harmonious body with many parts, many and varied talents, different gifts, different ministries, different culture... but one unified, harmonious body in the Spirit of Jesus (I Corinthians 12:3-13). In the Gospel reading of today, we read about Jesus bringing peace to the disciples who were hiding in fear and sending them out to forgive, to heal and to bring harmony and peace to a troubled world (John 20:19-23).

The prayer of Jesus, as he was preparing himself to face the cross, was that all will be one - all will experience the kind of oneness that he experienced with the Father; that all will be one in the oneness of himself and the Father; that the world will believe that the Father sent him; that the unity of all will be complete (John 17:20-26). The prayer of Jesus centered on abiding in him, in love, in unity, in harmony, in eternal glory - God living in us and we living in God. It is this unity, harmony, oneness that will convince the world of the truth of Christianity, the truth that Jesus came to proclaim and the place of Jesus in our life and the life of the world.

Only the love that abides in the hearts of men and women of courage and determination can tear down the barriers that keep us apart and bring us into communion with God and one another. St. Paul reminds us, "the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Romans 5:5). We are called to nurture this love and be steadfast in loving just as our God is steadfast in loving. We must strive to let this steadfast love define who we are and let it become the healing, binding and unifying force in our lives.

I encourage you to take a few minutes each day of this week to be still and get in touch with that love which the Holy Spirit has poured into your heart. Reflect on being steadfast in loving, serving and being a channel of peace, harmony and unity in a broken world.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Scroll down to read the reflections on the Scripture readings of today's mass....**

# **Pentecost Sunday**

**May 24, 2026**

**Dear friends, build your house on rock.**

**Try each day to follow Christ's word.**

**Listen to him as a true friend with whom you can share your path in life.**

**With him at your side, you will find courage and hope to face difficulties and problems,  
and even to overcome disappointments and setbacks.**

**(Pope Benedict XVI)**

## **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,  
one God, for ever and ever.

## **Liturgy of the Word**

Prayerfully read the first reading and then read my reflections below and spend a few moments of personal reflection. Do the same with Responsorial Psalm and other readings.

**From serenity comes gentleness, peacefulness, endurance  
and freedom of spirit.**

## **Acts 2:1-11**

The disciples experienced a harmony, a unity, and a fellowship that they never dreamed of! They were from different territories, they were of different background, they spoke different languages....but they understood each other! The disharmony, the disunity and the brokenness and confusion that people experienced at Babel was reversed...at Babel they began to speak

many languages and they could not understand each other anymore...at Pentecost, they spoke different languages and they understood each other...the Holy Spirit made it happen. The Holy Spirit filled the disciples with a new power....they were no more afraid...they spoke boldly...they moved with courage and compassion to bring the good news of Jesus to the world.....

## **Psalm 104**

Psalm 103 ended with “Bless the Lord, all His works...” Psalm 104 begins giving the reasons, why “my soul” should bless the Lord – because “all his works” do the same thing! All his creation shows forth His glory! God is clothed with “his creation”. God’s creation is pictured as his outer garment. Our poet may have had the story of creation in his mind as he composed this poem!

**Bless the Lord, O my soul!  
O Lord, my God, you are great indeed!  
How manifold are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your creatures.....**

## **I Corinthians 12:3-13**

Paul describes the community as one, unified, harmonious body...many parts, many and varied talents, different gifts, different ministries, different culture.....but one unified, harmonious body in the Spirit of Jesus.

## **John 20:19-23**

The disciples are sent out with the same mission of the master! “As the Father sent me, so I send you.....receive the Holy Spirit.” Just as the Father sent Jesus into the world, the disciples are sent with the good news of the father’s forgiving, healing, reconciling, redeeming Grace!

Jesus was sent into the world to be the light, to heal, to forgive, to reconcile, to bring hope, to bring harmony, to call forth justice, to proclaim the Father’s compassionate presence, to redeem, to take up the cross, to die and to rise again.....The disciple are sent just the same way.... “As the father sent me, so I sent you”.

What Jesus became for the disciples, the disciples must become for the world....what Jesus did for the world the disciples must do.....

Today’s Gospel passage says, “He breathed on them and said, receive the Holy Spirit...” Knowing well the limitations with which his disciples must live and work in the world, Jesus empowered them with his own Spirit.

Jesus had spoken to the disciples much about the Holy Spirit. He said to the disciples: I will ask the Father and He will send you another helper who will stay with you forever (Jn.14:16). The helper, the Holy Spirit will teach you everything and make you remember all I have told you (Jn.14:26). The Spirit will give them courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties (Jn. 15:26-27). The Spirit will lead them into truth (Jn.16:7-8, 13). Jesus breathed on them and said: "receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21-22). At Pentecost, the Spirit took "possession" of them (Acts 2:2-3). The Spirit transformed the disciples and Peter who denied knowing Jesus, so that they could go outside and begin preaching and proclaiming Jesus (Acts 2:15-17).

- It is the Holy Spirit within us who moves us to respond to God.
- Our witness to Christ is inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit from within.
- Our witness comes from long, lasting fellowship and intimacy with Christ. The disciples were witnesses because they have been with him. We can witness Christ only when we have been with him. The Spirit brings us into this fellowship with Christ and sustains that relationship.
- The witness comes from inner conviction, personal conviction. There can be no effective witness without personal conviction. The Spirit empowers, strengthens and sustains our conviction.
- The witness flows into outward testimony. A Christian witness is a person who not only knows Christ but wants others to know Christ. He is prepared to speak what is in his heart. The Spirit empowers the person to speak the truth that is in the heart.
- The Spirit gives courage to stand up and witness to him in the face of difficulties.
- In Scripture, the presence of the Holy Spirit is always an occasion of the return of harmony from chaos, freedom from slavery, rebirth from death.

**Pray that you may experience the Holy Spirit rushing in with gifts that will transform you into "Sons of God".**

**Saint of the Day, May 24 - Feast of Mary Help of Christians and 16 other saints are remembered this day.**

Saint John Chrysostom was the first person to use this Marian title in the year 345 as a devotion to the Virgin Mary. In 1572, during the expansion of the Islamic Ottoman Empire intended to invade Christian Europe, Pope Pius V invoked Christian armies and its victory achieved was consequently attributed to the intercession of Mary under this title.

Saint Don Bosco and Saint Vincent Pallotti also promoted Marian devotion under this title. Don Bosco built a huge basilica in her honor in 1868 and founded a religious congregation for women, under the title of, "The Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians". The title of Mary Help of Christians is associated with the defense of Christian Europe, the north of Africa and the Middle East from non-Christian peoples during the Middle Ages.

The feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians as we have it today, was instituted by Pope Pius VII. When Napoleon returned to Paris and Murat became king of Naples in March 1815, Pope Pius VII fled to Savona. After the Congress of Vienna and the battle of Waterloo, the pope returned to Rome in July 1815. To give thanks to God and Our Lady, he declared May 24, the anniversary of his return to be henceforth the feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians.

Fr. Gus Tharappel, msfs

**Dreams will remain mere dreams  
if they are not followed up with determination, patience,  
and persistence and above all Hope!**

