

PENTECOST SUNDAY

**It is a gift to know faithful people, people who are steadfast,
people whose inner strength urges them to share their love generously,
even when it costs them much.**

Acts 2:1-11

The disciples experienced a harmony, a unity, 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 any more...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 28 - Venerable Pierre Toussaint and 13 other saints are remembered this day.

Venerable Pierre Toussaint (1766-1853) was born into slavery in 1766, in present day Haiti, and in 1853 he died a free man in New York City. His life journey between these dates demonstrated his love and compassion for his neighbor as he embraced Christ's commandment to love one another.

In 1787 Pierre and his sister arrived in New York City with his master and his wife when they emigrated there from Haiti. Pierre was about 21 years old at the time, and his master sent him to a hairdresser as an apprentice. Pierre soon became a talented hairdresser and was in great demand. In 1791, Pierre's master died, and his widow Marie was left without much income. Filled with compassion for her, Pierre decided to stay and care for her. His substantial income was enough to purchase his sister's freedom and pay the household bills. Just before she died in 1807, Marie gave Pierre his own freedom.

This was the time when he took the last name "Toussaint" in honor of a hero of the Haitian revolution. Toussaint was a faithful Catholic and attended daily Mass regularly. He freely and generously gave most of his earnings to the poor of New York. He married in 1811, and he and his wife bought a large house and opened it to many black orphans whom they educated and taught trades. Pierre donated to various charities, generously assisting blacks and whites in need. They purchased the freedom of many slaves and aided French refugees. They cared for the sick, including those taken ill in the yellow fever epidemics. In his later years, Toussaint would not retire, as he said, "I have enough for myself, but if I stop working I have not enough for others." Toussaint died in 1853. An admirer called Toussaint, "God's reflection in ebony." Pope John Paul I declared Pierre Toussaint venerable in 1996.

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