

# **PENTECOST SUNDAY**

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

## **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 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.

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