

Cycle B – Pentecost – May 19, 2024

“Why do you stand looking up toward heaven? ...”

OPENING PRAYER (Psalm 104)

All: Alleluia, alleluia!
Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord, my God, you are very great.
O Lord, how manifold are your works!
The earth is full of your creatures.
All: Lord, send out your spirit
and renew the face of the earth.
Leader: When you take away their breath,
they die and return to their dust.
All: When you send forth your spirit,
they are created.
You renew the face of the earth.
Amen. Alleluia.



First Reading – Acts 2:1-11

The Jewish feast of Pentecost, falling seven weeks after Passover, customarily brought Jews from all parts of the known world to Jerusalem. At the time of Jesus this feast recalled the event on Mount Sinai when God established the covenant with his people through the gift of the Law to Moses. It is no coincidence that it is on this day that the apostles, gathered in the upper room experienced a stunning “sound and light show” of divine origin in the descent of the Holy Spirit. The list of ethnic groups who heard Peter’s first sermon already marks the universal nature of the mission of the early church.

1. Have you ever experienced the universality of the Church? Where and when?
2. Recall a time when the Holy Spirit dispelled your fear and moved you to act in courage.

Second Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

Paul’s earliest insight of Christian theology (several decades before the Gospels) of the followers of Jesus being one body, one organism, counters our modern culture which stresses individual rights. This Spirit does not magically “zap” people, as the Corinthians expected, but rather manifests an underlying unity in the diversity of gifts given “for the common good.”

1. How does your parish community manifest the cultural influence of individualism, and how does it manifest the Spirit’s unity in the diversity of gifts?
2. What gifts can you identify in all those gathered in your small group?

Gospel Reading – John 20:19-23

On that first Easter evening, John describes disciples gripped by fear. Jesus appears, and had to speak peace twice before that fear started to dissipate. Jesus' breathing of the Spirit carries echoes of Genesis 2 when God created the first human being and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." John's indication that Jesus' bringing of the Holy Spirit took place on the evening of the day of Resurrection led Tertullian (3rd century theologian) to establish that the Fifty Days of Easter (from Easter Sunday to Pentecost) are in fact one "great Sunday."

1. Recall a time when the Holy Spirit gave you courage to move from fear to confidence.
2. What gift or skill do you hesitate to use? What would help you overcome your fear?

LIVING THE WORD

God's challenge – take on a task you have been afraid to embark on.

PRAYING THE WORD

Intercession: For courage to stare down our own fears, for perseverance to walk with those who are gripped by fear, for deeper faith and commitment to love. We pray to the Lord.

(Invite personal intentions, ending with "Our Father...")

Concluding Prayer:

*Leader: Risen Jesus, you appear in glory
despite the locked doors in our hearts.*

**All: You banish our fears with your peace,
a peace the world cannot give.**

*Leader: Risen Jesus, you call us to put all gifts
at the service of your body on earth, the church.*

**All: Help us strengthen our unity in you
through the diversity of backgrounds and gifts.
Alleluia. Amen.**

Leader: Let us share with one another the peace of the risen Lord.