



Bringing Home the Word

Pentecost (C)
June 9, 2019

Getting to Know God

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Our daughter married into a large Italian family whose get-togethers include dozens of people. (More than fifty were there for Christmas dinner, and not everyone could make it.) Ours is a small and often-quiet family, so Katy had to get used to more noise and activity than she had growing up. It was like learning a new language. It's often that way when couples wed. Over time, we come to know the inside jokes, the way the in-laws mark occasions, who we can joke with, and who prefers a more serious interaction. Just as with growing up in our own families, we

become a part of them and they become a part of us.

When the Holy Spirit descended on those gathered in the upper room, it was like a wedding. They had to learn the language of God's family—one that included proclamation, sharing, repentance, and mercy. They had to learn what it meant to be part of one body, using their unique gifts to build on what Christ had already started. With the Holy Spirit as inspiration and source of grace, the disciples and apostles were sent to testify and invite the world to the eternal life that Christ offers.

In any relationship it takes time to get to know the other. God has the advantage in his relationship with us—he already knows us fully and intimately. In getting to know him and learning his language, we may feel awkward or out of place. But he constantly welcomes and invites us to be a part of his life and Church, knowing we might eventually come to live with him forever. +

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Sunday Readings

Acts 2:1–11

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

1 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13 or Romans 8:8–17

In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free.

John 20:19–23 or John 14:15–16, 23b–26

Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

A Word from Pope Francis

The Holy Spirit is the fire of love burning in the Church and in our hearts, even though we often cover him with the ash of our sins. Let us ask him: Spirit of God, Lord, who dwell in my heart and in the heart of the Church, guiding and shaping her in diversity, come!

—Pentecost Mass, June 4, 2017



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- God already knows you well. Are you able to relax and confide your deepest thoughts to him?
- How can you use your unique gifts to invite others to the eternal life that Christ offers?

The Holy Spirit: The Breath of Life

By Michael D. Guinan, OFM

One hears lots of talk lately about spirituality. People are interested in living deeper spiritual lives. For some, the spirit in spirituality is the human spirit reaching for transcendence. But for the Christian, this isn't enough. The spirit is the Holy Spirit of God. In a real sense, our Christian spiritual life can be seen as the art of letting God's Spirit fill us, work in us, guide us.

But what is this Spirit? In Scripture the meaning of "spirit" (whether the Hebrew *ruach*, the Greek *pneuma*, or the Latin *spiritus*) is wind or breath. The spirit of God is God's breath, and breath is a sign of life. When we live, we breathe. God's breath empowers us to do God's work.

Moses was led by God's Spirit in teaching the people; the Spirit rushed on David when he was anointed king; the Servant of the Lord received the Spirit to establish justice for the lands. The Spirit of God is the dynamic breath by which God achieves his divine purposes—revelation, deliverance, and the rule of justice and peace.

All of this comes into focus in Jesus. He is conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit, and his ministry begins and continues in the Spirit. He preaches, confronts sin, and brings healing through the Spirit. At his death, John



records in his Gospel, Jesus "handed over the spirit" (19:30). At the Last Supper, Jesus promised his disciples the gift of the Spirit. When Jesus appeared to them on the evening of his resurrection day, "he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).

Gifts of the Spirit

The Christian, then, lives in and with the power of the same Breath/Spirit as Jesus. "But whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Corinthians 6:17). The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Galatians 5:22–23).

Over the centuries, for various reasons, many Christians have come to think of the Spirit in very spiritual terms—connected with our souls. The body (and the world of matter) is then spurned, distrusted, even despised as we seek to save our souls.

Body and Soul

Yet nothing could be further from the truth of Scripture. It isn't matter that is opposed to the Spirit, but only sin. When Paul speaks of our whole person under the dominion of sin, weakness, and death, he calls this living "according to the flesh" (Romans 8:5–10).

This use of "flesh" should not be equated with the body. "Living according to the Spirit" means that our whole person is guided by the Spirit of God. We Christians we are whole persons—body and soul, thoughts and feelings, emotions and passions, hopes and fears. We are called to live all of our relationships—to ourselves, to others, to all creation, and to God—in and with the power of the Spirit.

All of us share the same call and challenge. Through baptism and confirmation, we all share in Jesus' gift of the Spirit. The Second Vatican Council stressed that there is only one basic Christian call to holiness, but we are all called (vocation) and sent (mission), each in her or his own way, to continue Christ's presence in our world today, sharing in his work of teaching, healing, and working for life, justice, and peace.

This is a daunting challenge, but we do not face it alone. The Spirit/Breath of God is with us, empowering us to share in God's purposes and work. +



*Lord, you send forth your Spirit.
Teach me to walk your way
of love and compassion
in hope and gratitude.*

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 10–15

Monday, Blessed Virgin Mary:
Gn 3:9–15, 20 or Acts 1:12–14 / Jn 19:25–34

Tuesday, St. Barnabas:
Acts 11:21b–26; 13:1–3 / Mt 5:13–16

Wednesday, Weekday:
2 Cor 3:4–11 / Mt 5:17–19

Thursday, St. Anthony of Padua:
2 Cor 3:15—4:1, 3–6 / Mt 5:20–26

Friday, Weekday:
2 Cor 4:7–15 / Mt 5:27–32

Saturday, Weekday:
2 Cor 5:14–21 / Mt 5:33–37