

Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

PENTECOST SUNDAY / B

23 MAY 2021

You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires.

Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! / Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful / and kindle in them the fire of your love. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Jn 15: 26-27; 16: 12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth.

Jesus said to his disciples:

'When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset. I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: All he tells you will be taken from what is mine.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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THE EMPOWERING SPIRIT

If last week spoke of the transition between the time of Jesus' ministry and the time of the Church, then the feast of Pentecost gives us the opportunity to recognise that we have also been empowered for mission. It is a reminder that we are not alone and that the Spirit is with us to help us by giving us the means to confront the challenges before us. While there is a sense of transition there is a sense of continuity as well. The Gospel for today shows Jesus' taking great pains to prepare the disciples for the time of the Spirit that will come after his departure. On one level there is loss, and yet they are assured that what the Spirit will bring will be in harmony with what the Father had already entrusted to Jesus, and what Jesus had given them.

A great deal of Paul's energy was taken up with guiding fledgling communities as they learned to give voice, in their daily lives, to the experience of the Spirit. It is an experience that must lead to the bearing of very concrete and tangible fruits; fruits that ripen when we leave behind self-centredness and turn to our brothers and sisters in love. For Paul the gift of the Spirit is not only God's gift to us, it also contains a dimension of responsibility. In a sense, the invitation and challenge of Pentecost are always whether we can learn to speak in the language of love, a love that goes beyond oneself and reaches out to the other.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Acts 2: 1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak different languages.

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 103: 1, 24, 29-31, 34. R. v. 30

R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth. (or Alleluia!)

1. Bless the Lord, my soul! / Lord God, how great you are! / How many are your works, O Lord! / The earth is full of your riches. R.

2. You take back your spirit, they die, / returning to the dust from which they came. / You send forth your spirit, they are created; / and you renew the face of the earth. R.



3. May the glory of the Lord last for ever! / May the Lord rejoice in his works! / May my thoughts be pleasing to him. / I find my joy in the Lord. R.

SECOND READING

Gal 5: 16-25

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Galatians

The fruit of the Spirit.

If you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you. When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements, factions, envy; drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against things like that, of course.