

May 19, 2024

Daily Reflections



PENTECOST SUNDAY

By Sr. Christine Hilliard, CSJ

*The feast of recognition and celebration of the Spirit
who guides, creates, renews and inspires.*

Today's First Reading

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus

and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

ACTS 2:1-11

Reflection

For the Israelites, Pentecost was originally an ancient agricultural feast celebrating the abundance of the grain harvest. Later it commemorated the giving of the Law/Covenant. During the desert journey, the people were forged by the gift of the Law into God's holy people.

In the early Christian community, the Spirit enabled them to speak the same message of hope in different languages, which created unity among the variety of people.

Rather than the "acts of the apostles," perhaps a more accurate name for this first reading would be "acts of the Spirit," who is the key figure in post-Resurrection time . . . which is also our time.

Today's Gospel

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

JOHN 20:19-23

Reflection

Significantly, the disciples recognized Jesus and rejoiced in his presence when they saw his wounded side and hands. The message of the cross was not failure, but rather forgiveness. That message made Pentecost a day of power and peace.

When the author of the Gospel of John wrote at the turn of the 1st century, the first disciples were deceased. The community understood that the Spirit of Jesus was within each of them and among them through their baptism. They knew themselves to be filled with and guided by the same Spirit as had their ancestors in the faith.



For Pondering

Which phrase from these two readings

- gives you hope and courage to live “spirit-ually?” Which companions help you?
 - reminds you of the Spirit’s gift(s) to you? What has been your response to the Spirit’s gift(s)?
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For Prayer

*O God, who by the mystery of today’s great feast
sanctifies every people and nation,
continue to pour out the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the whole universe.
Animate all life by your Spirit and ignite our hearts with your love.
Amen.*

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