Pentecost Sunday

Gospel text (*Jn* 20:19-23): 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.”

“Receive the Holy Spirit”

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Today, on Pentecost, the promise that Christ made to the Apostles is fulfilled. On the evening of Easter Sunday, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22). The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost solemnly renews and brings to completion this gift with outward manifestations. Thus, the Paschal mystery is culminated.

The Spirit that Jesus conveys creates a new human condition in the disciple and fosters unity. When arrogance led people to challenge God by building the Tower of Babel, God confused their languages, and they could not understand each other. At Pentecost, the opposite occurs: by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were understood by people of the most diverse origins and languages.

The Holy Spirit is the inner Teacher who guides the disciples towards truth, who motivates them to do good, who comforts them in pain and transforms them internally, giving them new strength and capacity.

On the first Pentecost of the Christian era, the Apostles were gathered together with the Virgin Mary, and they were in prayer. Solitude and a prayerful attitude are essential to receive the Spirit. "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" (Acts 2:2-3).

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to preach boldly. Those men, once fearful, had been transformed into courageous preachers who did not fear imprisonment, torture, or martyrdom. It's not

surprising; the power of the Spirit was in them.

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, is the soul of my soul, the life of my life, the being of my being; He is my sanctifier, the guest of my innermost self. To mature in the life of faith, it is essential that our relationship with Him becomes increasingly conscious and personal. On this Pentecost celebration, let us throw open the doors of our inner being.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “For where the Church is, there also is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church and every grace” (Saint Irenaeus of Lyon)

- “The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation flows directly from the Paschal Mystery. Forgiveness is not the fruit of our own efforts but rather a gift, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit who fills us with the the wellspring of mercy and of grace that flows unceasingly from the open heart of the Crucified and Risen Christ” (Francis)

- “The Apostle's Creed associates faith in the forgiveness of sins not only with faith in the Holy Spirit, but also with faith in the Church and in the communion of saints. It was when he gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles that the risen Christ conferred on them his own divine power to forgive sins” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 976)