

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»

Mons. José Ángel SAIZ Meneses, Archbishop of Seville

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Today, the day of Pentecost, the fulfillment of the promise Christ made the Apostles is finally accomplished. The evening of that Easter day He breathed on them and said to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (Jn 20:22). The Holy Spirit's arrival on the Day of Pentecost renews and brings this gift to plenitude in a solemn way and with external manifestations. Thus culminates the paschal mystery.

Jesus conveys the Spirit into the disciples to create a new human condition while producing unity. When man's arrogance made him think he could defy God by building the Babel tower, God mixed their languages so they could not understand each other any more. With the Pentecost it just happen the contrary: on the grace of the Holy Spirit, people from the most varied origins and languages can understand the Apostles.

The Holy Spirit is the intimate and personal Master who guides the disciple towards the truth, who motivates him to do good, who consoles him in the pain, who transforms him intimately, while giving him a new strength and capacity.

The first day of the Pentecost of the Christian era, the Apostles were gathered around the Virgin Mary, while praying. The recollection and the praying attitude

are necessary 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).

They remained full of the Holy Spirit and, bravely, they started to preach. Those fearful men had been transformed into courageous preachers unafraid of jail, torture or martyrdom. This should not surprise us, for the Holy Spirit’s strength dwelt within them.

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is my soul's soul, the life of my life, the entity of my entity; it is my sanctifier, the guest in my deepest interior. To reach maturity in a life of faith our relation with Him must be, time and again, more conscientious, more personal. In this celebration of the Pentecost we must have the doors of our interior life wide open.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“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)

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“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)

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“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, N° 976)