

PENTECOST SUNDAY, CYCLE A, MAY 24, 2026.

First reading: The Holy Spirit descends upon the apostles gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-11).

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 104: God's Spirit renews the earth.

Second Reading: We are all one in Christ Jesus (1Corinthians 12:3b-7,12-13).

John: Jesus appears to his disciples and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-23).

The Gospel of John (20:19-23, NIV). "On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus is in my heart – a story:

Four-year-old Amanda was taken to the doctor's office with a little fever. The doctor looked in her ears and asked, "Who's in there? Donald Duck?" She said, "No." He looked in her open mouth, "Who's in there? Mickey Mouse?" Again, Amanda said, "No." He put his stethoscope on her heart and asked, "Who's in there? Barney?" Amanda replied, "**No, Jesus is in my heart**". Pentecost is a celebration of the physical presence of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in the Church.

Pentecost literally means 50th. Pentecost is a big feast celebrated by both Jews and Christians alike. For the Jews, this is celebrated 50 days after Passover, while for us Christians, we celebrate it 50 days after Easter/the Resurrection of Jesus. Today's readings remind us that Pentecost is an event of both the past and the present. The texts also remind us that the gifts of the Holy Spirit should move us into action and inspire us to share these gifts with others.

After rising to life in the early hours of that Sunday, Jesus, made a dramatic visit to his disciples in the upper room “with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, **“Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord**”. Jesus did not show up there to reprimand them for deserting him during his trial and death, or for their lack of faith, or for their fears, or for all the uncertainties in their minds. He showed up to restore peace, joy, strength, and hope in his disciples. This encounter brings reconciliation, renewal, and mission. Jesus shows up here also to fulfill the promise he made earlier, “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth”. (John 14: 15-17). Jesus Christ bestows peace, literally breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, and sends them to continue his work of healing and reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins. This is the foundation of the sacrament of confession through which bishops and priests have the authority to forgive sins in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ act of breathing the Holy Spirit mirrors God’s act of breathing life into Adam at the time of Creation. In fact, both the Greek and Hebrew words for “spirit” can also be translated as “breath.” This gospel passage reminds us that the Church is called to be a reconciling presence in the world. The reconciling presence of Christ is celebrated in the Church’s sacramental life. In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are cleansed of sin and become a new creation in Christ. In the Sacrament of Penance, the Church celebrates the mercy, grace, and healing of God through the forgiving of sins. This reconciling presence is also to be a way of life for Christians. In situations of conflict, we are to be agents of peace and harmony among people.

KEY IMPACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

- 1. Healing and Forgiveness of sins:** John (20:19-23) is the foundation of the sacrament of reconciliation.
- 2. Empowerment for Witnessing:** The Holy Spirit provided miraculous power and boldness, transforming fearful men into passionate preachers of the gospel despite threats, exemplified by Peter's preaching after Pentecost and the growth of the community.
- 3. The Empowerment of Gifts:** The early church was marked by gifts of the Spirit (charismata), including healing, administrative, preaching, and prophecy, which served as divine validation of their message. The gifts, as we can understand from the second reading today

(1Corinthians 12:3b-7,12-13), were more about the source (God) and the purpose (building up the community of God) and less about the recipient.

4. Guidance and Strategy: The Holy Spirit clarifies and constantly reminds us of Christ's teachings. He guides the Magisterium of the Church in presenting Christ's teachings accurately and facilitates major decisions within the Church.

5. Internal Growth and Holiness: The Spirit was viewed as a "giver of life" that filled the church, creating a community focused on prayer, unity, and righteousness.

6. Inclusivity and Unity: The Spirit broke down barriers, bringing together diverse cultures and populations, and affirming that Gentiles were on equal footing with Jews in the early church.

7. Miracles and Miraculous Signs: The Holy Spirit enabled miracles that, alongside the message, helped convert thousands of people.

8. The Holy Spirit listens to our prayers, enables us to pray, and speaks to us.

Let us pray:

"Come Holy Spirit. Make our ears to hear. Make our eyes to see. Make our mouths to speak. Make our hearts to seek. Make our hands to reach out. And touch the world with your love. AMEN."

(From Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman's favorite little prayer, "Come Holy Spirit).

On this Memorial Day, we celebrate, we honor, and we remember them.

Almighty Father, we pray for peace and unity across our land. Guide our nation toward reconciliation and understanding, fostering a spirit of togetherness, inspired by the sacrifices of our brave service men and women. Help us to lay aside our differences and work together for the common good. May the Holy Spirit reign in our hearts and in our communities, creating a nation that truly reflects Your love. We make our prayers through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Fr. Martin Homily Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2026