

livingtheword

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Hearing and Living the Sunday Readings

Reading 1 Acts 2:1-11

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."

Reading 2 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Rom 8:8-17

1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

Reflection Questions

- Reading the passages slowly and reflectively, what word, phrase or idea strikes you in the readings? (circle or underline them)
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally through these words?
- Pentecost was a Jewish harvest feast which also involved a liturgical celebration of bringing water into the temple and pouring water from the side of the altar. Life-giving water would symbolically flow from Jerusalem and give life to the whole world! Jesus fulfills and replaces this Jewish feast saying that out of him will flow life-giving water (Jn 7:37-39). What does this image of Pentecost teach you?
- Pentecost is the reversal of the Old Testament Tower of Babel story (see Gen 11). Humankind's sin and self importance building the tower to reach and equal God eventuated in the scattering of people and the confusion caused by different languages. The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost unites people and leads people to understand each other and the christian message 'in his native language'. What does this suggest is the true function of the Holy Spirit in the world? In the Church?
- Paul wrote to the Community at Corinth because some people who didn't have the gift of tongues were considered inferior. It was causing division in the community. One gift was not to be stressed over another. Everyone is gifted... (contd)

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Gospel Jn 20:19-23 or Jn 14:15-16, 23b-26

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."

- What gift do you find easy to share and benefit others with? What gift do you feel you would like to develop more and use for God and the community?
- The Spirit and 'gifts' are connected to the 'body'. Which part of the 'body' do you identify with your gifts - eyes, head, heart, hands, mouth, ears. How do you show this in your daily life?
- Jesus is able to pass through locked doors to offer peace and forgiveness. What 'locked doors' are present in your life? Use your imagination in a time of prayer and allow Jesus to meet you on the other side of these locked doors..... what happened?
- The Spirit sends the Disciples / the Church 'on mission'. The Church is as it were 'plugged in' to a living power moulding all into the image and consciousness of Christ. Pentecost fills the Church and allows the Church to be the extension of Jesus' ministry in the world. Forgiveness of sins is at the very heart of healing hearts, wounds, families, communities. What feelings and thoughts arise in a person when they are 'sent'? Are you conscious of being sent out by the Father to 'repair the world'?
- In the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit had a difficult time in getting the disciples out from hiding behind locked doors and praying in the temple and in people's homes. It was only persecution in Jerusalem that eventually caused the light of the good news of Jesus to be given 'to all the nations'. Welcoming gentiles into the christian community was a huge obstacle and struggle for Jews who were the first christians. What are the big obstacles to unity and inclusion in the Church today? How could the Church be more reconciling in the marketplace and with those the world 'excludes'?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?