



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



Pentecost Sunday, Cycle C

Fr. David Rosenberg
Institute for Spiritual Direction
visit us at <http://www.ISDministries.org/>

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you ...Breathe the Holy Spirit" John 20:23

In this Gospel we profoundly reflect on the gift of the Spirit and the bestowal of the power to forgive. This appearance of Jesus occurs on the evening of Easter Sunday, which is a reminder that Pentecost is the other end of the Easter Feast.

John presents the power to forgive as given to the church as a whole. The centrality of mutual forgiveness for the creation of a life sustaining Community's with Christ as our center is key. Jesus promises the Spirit as an advocate. Through the gift of the Spirit, the Father and the Son will dwell with those who love Christ are animated by his words. The promised Spirit reminds the disciples of what Jesus taught, helping all disciples understand Jesus and his teaching, across the ages.

Ponder our thirst for the Spirit. *"Come, all who thirst, come to the waters."* (Isaiah 55) Without Spirit, we "die" quickly. When we live by the law we die by the law. (see Galatians 2:19) But the Spirit illuminates us, animates us, making us instruments of peace for our family, Community and the world.

We thirst for Spirit when the pleasure, purpose and passion of life have gone out. The foundation of biological life is still there, but without spirit we wither and die. The spiritless condition can be so complete that we do not even know how dead and depleted we are. It does not work to try to fill the inside from the outside. The result has no "heart", the spiritual center of our being. But, we must recognize thirst before we can seek water. Then the drink of water has to come from the well within. In the Disciples Way we are illuminated by Spirit. Grace, the River of Life becomes that for which we long. In the Spirit we find the meaning of life, the unity of power through animation by spirit, infused into our flesh.

As we channel this power into our life, we are given meaning on a religious and Community level. In this new holistic life through animation of body mind and spirit we are one for in Him we live and move and have our being (see Acts 17:28).

We grasp our ultimate meaning and purpose in life as this life-power of the Spirit is unleashed within us. We are "inspired" as we breathe deeply of the Holy Spirit, received to us through the incarnate presence of Christ in others. Vitality returns. We then let the spirit within flow outward from our "heart," our spiritual center.

Through Pentecost we realize what the Gospel writers realized, that this could not be accomplished until Christ was risen and glorified. The whole revelation of Jesus, in all its glory of divine self-giving love, must be grasped deeply within, to the very core of our being. The Spirit of the Father and Son flows into our spirit, and together we flow into the world. Only then is our thirst slacked, as we come to the one who invited us to drink from the River of Life, the center of his glory.

Reflect on Jesus' words as you celebrate the gift of the Spirit. Let the Sacred Heart of Jesus dwell in you richly as you ponder the deep love Jesus has for us, a love that prompts the sending forth of the Spirit to be with us always.

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

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.”*

The Gospel of the Lord