

## FIRST READING – C PENTECOST

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

When the day of Pentecost had come,  
they were all together in one place.  
And suddenly from heaven there came a sound  
like the rush of a violent wind,  
and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.  
Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them,  
and a tongue rested on each of them.  
All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit  
and began to speak in other languages,  
as the Spirit gave them ability.  
Now there were holy Jews from every nation under heaven  
living in Jerusalem.  
And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered,  
because each one heard them speaking in their own languages  
Amazed and astonished, they asked,  
“Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?  
And how is it that we hear, each of us,  
in our own language?  
Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia,  
Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,  
Phrygia and Pamphylia,  
Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene,  
and visitors from Rome, both Jews and converts,  
Cretans and Arabs —  
in our own languages we hear them speaking  
about God’s deeds of power.”

### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Parthians	<b>Par-thee-ans</b>
Medes	<b>Meeds</b>
Elamites	<b>El-am-ites</b>
Mesopotamia	<b>Mess-o-pa-tame-ee-a</b>
Judea	<b>Jew-dee-a</b>
Cappadocia	<b>Capp-a-dough-see-a</b>
Pontus	<b>Pon-tuss</b>
Phrygia	<b>Fridge-ee-a</b>
Pamphylia	<b>Pam-fill-ee-a</b>
Cyrene	<b>Sigh-reen</b>
Cretans	<b>Cree-tans</b>

Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

◆ ◆ ◆  
The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## SECOND READING – C PENTECOST

A reading from the letter of Saint Paul to the Romans.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Brothers and sisters:

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh;

you are in the Spirit,

since the Spirit of God dwells in you.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ  
does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you,

though the body is dead because of sin,

the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you,

he who raised Christ from the dead

will give life to your mortal bodies also

through his Spirit that dwells in you.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh,  
to live according to the flesh –

for if you live according to the flesh, you will die;

but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God.

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery

to fall back into fear,

but you have received a spirit of adoption to sonship.

When we cry, “Abba! Father!”

it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit

that we are children of God,

and if children, then heirs,

heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ –

if, in fact, we suffer with him

so that we may also be glorified with him.



Pause for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – C PENTECOST

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus spoke to his disciples:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

And I will ask the Father,

and he will give you another Advocate,

to be with you forever.

Whoever loves me will keep my word,

and my Father will love him,

and we will come to him and make our home with him.

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words;

and the word that you hear is not mine,

but is from the Father who sent me.

I have said these things to you while I am still with you.

But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,

whom the Father will send in my name,

will teach you everything,

and remind you of all that I have said to you.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

Pentecost originated as a final celebration of the ingathering of the grain harvest, which had begun at Passover. Later Judaism transformed it into a feast of salvation history celebrating the giving of the Law at Sinai and the establishment of Israel as God's people.

All these associations were carried over into the Christian feast that marked the conclusion of the great fifty days. The grain harvest and the Law are replaced by the gift of the Spirit, and the constitution of the old Israelis replaced by the constitution of the new. The feast of the Law becomes the feast of the Spirit.

### Reading I: Acts 2:1-11

There is no unanimity in the New Testament about a single outpouring of the Spirit. The gospel of the day, as we shall see, places the gift of the Spirit on Easter Sunday evening, while Acts 2 puts it on Pentecost.

Originally, perhaps, the gift of the Spirit was associated with each of the resurrection appearances, and perhaps the Pentecost story corresponds to the otherwise unknown appearance to the five hundred (1 Cor 15:6).

Historically, this appearance marks the foundation of the Church as a wider community than the original Twelve and the beginning of the kerygma. Perhaps, as a later part of this story suggests (the crowd's suspicion that the apostles were full of new wine), the beginning of the kerygma was marked by an outburst of glossolalia such as Paul describes as taking place at Corinth (1 Cor 12-14).

This earlier concept of glossolalia has been overlaid with a new symbolism (whether due to Luke or to his tradition, we cannot say) in which Pentecost reverses the effect of Babel.

### Responsorial Psalm: 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

This is a hymn of praise to God for his works in creation. The dominant theology of the Spirit in the wisdom literature ("the Spirit of God fills the world") stresses the work of the Spirit in the created order.

By contrast, the New Testament concentrates almost exclusively on the eschatological work of the Spirit. The pneumatology of the New Testament is conditioned by its Christology.

When the psalmist speaks of the "renewal" of creation through the Spirit, he is probably thinking of no more than the renewal of nature at springtime.

But in Christian use it can be reinterpreted to mean the eschatological renewal of creation, a renewal of which the Church is the first fruits.

## Reading II: Romans 8:8-17

Chapter 8 forms the climax of the first, doctrinal part of Romans. In chapters 1-4 the Apostle had first prepared the way for, and then enunciated, his message of justification by grace alone through faith. Now, having dealt in chapters 5-7 with certain objections to that message, Paul is ready to move from justification to the new life in the Spirit that justification opens up for the believers.

(Verses) 8-11 can be found on the fifth Sunday of Lent in series A.

These verses speak of the Spirit's indwelling the believers as a result of their baptism, making them participants in advance in the resurrection life and renewing their inner being daily in preparation for that resurrection life.

Verses 12-17 insist that baptism is only a beginning. Life in the Spirit is a life of freedom, but it is always a freedom struggling with constant temptation. For life in the Spirit means being under the lordship of Christ.

The baptized are not under obligation to the "flesh" (our old, unredeemed nature, not some higher nature); therefore they must mortify the deeds of the body (remember, this will include pride as well as sensuality). They must be "driven" by the Spirit.

At this point notice how Paul appropriates and sanctions the language of the charismatic enthusiasts, which he had probably picked up at Corinth. But, significantly, he gives it an ethical twist.

Not spiritual excitement and religious emotion but obedient Christian living is the supreme test of the Spirit's presence and activity.

It is that, rather than overpowering emotion, that will entitle Christians to cry out in worship, "Abba, Father." And still that acclamation is characterized by a "not yet." Only at the final consummation will the believers really receive the "adoption" anticipated in baptism.

For, as an Anglican theologian of the last generation, Oliver Chase Quick, used to teach, sacraments are both symbolic and instrumental. Baptism is symbolic of our final salvation, and it is instrumental in inaugurating the life in the Spirit that is to be consummated in that final salvation.

As we noted above, the freedom of the Spirit is a struggling freedom. This means that baptism inaugurates a life characterized by an element of suffering.

Suffering is symbolized in baptism when the converts symbolically die with Christ; it is effectualized internally in mortification, and externally in persecution.

Then, at the final consummation, the suffering will lead to glory, when the believers will inherit the kingdom of God with Christ (v. 17).

### **Gospel: John 14:15-16, 23b-26**

We see here the same kind of spiral thought that characterizes the farewell discourse throughout and of which we spoke in our comments on last Sunday's gospel. The points made are:

1. Love of Christ means obedience to his commandments.
2. The promise of the Paraclete (RSV: "Counselor") sent by the Father in response to the prayer of the Son.
3. The Spirit, whom the world cannot receive, will dwell in the community.
4. The coming of the Spirit is equivalent to the return of the Son and almost completely fulfills the primitive expectation of the parousia.
5. The world will no longer see the Christ, but the community will (a) see him, (b) live because he lives, (c) know the mutual indwelling of Christ with the Father and of Christ with the community.
6. This indwelling is a relationship of mutual love that includes obedience to Christ's commandments.

It will again be noted how point 6 brings us full circle to where we were at point 1. Yet, the spiral leads to an enrichment of understanding.

The Christian life is not an external observance of Christ's commandments but an intense relationship of the community to the three Persons of the Trinity, each with a specific role to play in this relationship.

The Spirit conveys the presence of the Son, who reveals the Father.

But this intense personal relationship is not dissolved into mere emotion; it is concretely and soberly manifested in a life of obedience to Christ's commandments.

The departure of Jesus does not mean that he is now absent. It means his ever-renewed presence through the coming of the Spirit to the community. That is the Easter message of this gospel reading.

### **Commentary on John 14:23-29**

In the Easter season we tend to read the farewell discourses, with their promise of the coming of the Paraclete (RSV: "Counselor"), as discourses given by the risen and not yet

ascended Lord during the forty days in preparation for the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

For the evangelist, they are discourses of the earthly Jesus, placed in the context of the Last Supper. They look through and beyond the death of Jesus to his glorification, which releases the gift of the Spirit. Thus, in the early Church the whole of the fifty days included the celebration of the gift of the Spirit, not just the day of Pentecost.

We are here listening to a promise fulfilled at Easter. In the Fourth Gospel the risen Christ conveys the gift of the Spirit to his disciples on Easter Sunday evening (see the gospel of Pentecost Sunday). The Spirit is, as in Paul's letters, the gift of the risen Christ.

In the gift of the Spirit, the risen Christ and the Father come and make their home with the disciples.

The function of the Spirit is to "teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." It is not the work of the Spirit to convey ever new revelations, but to unfold in ever new understanding, interpretation, and application the once-for-all revelation of Jesus Christ ("all that I have said to you").

"His work is more than a reminiscence of the ipsissima verba of the Son of God; it is a living representation of all that he had spoken to his disciples, a creative exploitation of the gospel" (E. C. Hoskyns).

This ongoing work of the Spirit gives the disciples peace and takes away their fear, because the Spirit is always there as their helper who stands by them in persecution and martyrdom.

Reginald H. Fuller