

# ***Come, Spirit of Forgiveness!***

## **I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS**

### **FIRST READING** (Acts 2:1-11)

#### *Inside the room*

<sup>1\*</sup> When the time for **Pentecost** was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. <sup>2b</sup> And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind,\* and it filled the entire house in which they were. <sup>3c</sup> Then there appeared to them **tongues as of fire,\*** which parted and came to rest on each one of them. <sup>4d</sup> And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues,\* as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

#### *Outside the room*

<sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. <sup>7e</sup> They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? <sup>9</sup> We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, <sup>11</sup> both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

#### **THE FOCUS: Descent of the Holy Spirit**

### **COMMENTARY**

- Pentecost = 50 days after the resurrection
- The Reading is divided into two parts:  
First, what happens inside the room;  
Second, what happens outside the room.
- ***Inside the room*** are the apostles. The Holy Spirit comes in the form of a noise (sound) and tongues of fire. Result: the apostles speak in different languages (glossolalia).
- ***Outside the room*** are devout Jews from everywhere. They gather together because of



the sound. Their reaction: they were confused, astounded, amazed. (they heard them speaking in his own language), they asked the question: How come these Galileans speak our own language?

- The people mentioned represent the international community at that time. They can be traced in the map in the early Church.

### **REFLECTIONS**

The descent of the Holy Spirit coincides with the Jewish Feast of Pentecost (*Feast of Weeks, so called because it falls on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the ceremony of the barley sheaf during Passover. This agricultural feast marks the beginning of the offering of first fruits.*)

It is no wonder that the Jews from all over the world are here in Jerusalem at this time because they are required to attend this feast. Ex 23: 14-17; 34, 18-24 require worshippers to appear before Yahweh on the feasts of Unleavened Bread (Passover), Weeks (Pentecost), and In-gathering (Succoth, Tabernacles).

If we are possessed (filled with) by the holy Spirit, we can do?

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**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34)  
**LORD, SEND OUT YOUR SPIRIT, AND RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH. Or ALLELUIA.**

**SECOND READING** (1 Cor 12:2-7,12-13)

*The effect of the holy Spirit*

<sup>2\*</sup> *a* You know how, when you were pagans, you were constantly attracted and led away to mute idols. <sup>3b</sup> Therefore, I tell you that nobody speaking by the spirit of God says, “Jesus be accursed.” And no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the **holy Spirit**.

*Different gifts, but same Spirit*

<sup>4\*</sup> *c* There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same **Spirit**; <sup>5</sup> there are different forms of service but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each individual the manifestation of the **Spirit** is given for some benefit.

*Different parts, but one body*

<sup>12\*</sup> *s* 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. <sup>13b</sup> 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**.

**THE FOCUS:** Again the focus is the Holy Spirit

**COMMENTARY**

- When one possesses the Holy Spirit, he **speaks** properly about Jesus: “Jesus is Lord.” One will not curse Him. Right utterance is a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Notice the word “mute.” This adjective is put in contrast to God who speaks through the Holy Spirit. It is in contrast also to the disciples whom the holy Spirit empowers to speak.
- Paul discusses the variety of **gifts**. Christians owe their gifts to the Holy Spirit (v. 28).

**REFLECTIONS**

The Holy Spirit changes what we utter with our mouths. With the Holy Spirit, we affirm that “Jesus, not the mute idols, is Lord.”

The Holy Spirit is the source of our giftedness. Our gifts (given free) are for the good of the community. They should not be used to destroy other people or ourselves (by being too proud of them.)

**GOSPEL READING** (Jn 20:19-23)

<sup>19\*</sup> *j* 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.” <sup>20k</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. \* The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21\*</sup> *l* [Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” <sup>22\*</sup> *m* And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “**Receive the holy Spirit.** <sup>23\*</sup> *n* **Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.**”

**THE FOCUS:** The Action of the Holy Spirit

**COMMENTARY**

- Right after breathing on the apostles the Holy Spirit, Jesus says to them “*Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them....*”
- The resurrected Christ sends forth the apostles with the Holy Spirit with a mission to forgive.
- Is this the same Holy Spirit that the apostles receive on Pentecost? Yes.

**REFLECTIONS**

Jesus, the resurrected Christ, appears to his fearful disciples, with the greeting “Peace be with you.” Jesus wants to convert their fear into peace. One who lives in fear does not live in peace.

Jesus’ mysterious appearance assures the disciples that they are on the right track in their belief and in following Jesus.

**II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR HOMILY/SHARING**

The First Reading tells about the descent of the Holy Spirit in the forms of sound and fire. The Second Reading tells what the Holy Spirit gives (gifts). The Gospel Reading talks about the resurrected Jesus breathing forth the Holy Spirit to the apostles before sending them to forgive..

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**III. OUR CONTEXT**

1. Why is forgiveness from God or someone and/or forgiving someone a liberating experience?
2. Share a moment when forgiveness has become an instrument of growth in your parish.(HM)

