

Readings for Sunday, May 31, 2020 Pentecost Sunday



AS WE GATHER

What can “top” the story of Easter? For fifty days, the Church has exalted in the glory of the resurrection of Jesus, shouting, “The Lord is risen” and “He is risen indeed.” “This is the feast of victory” we’ve said and sung. But our risen Lord has told us there is more—there is something greater. Today, on the great fiftieth day of our celebration, the Lord poured out in a dramatic way the Holy Spirit. Not as if the Spirit has been absent until now, for wherever faith is, there is the evidence of the working of God the Holy Spirit. Not a different helper, but the one true triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is poured out into the world. We hear the mighty acts of God in our own language to this day. We heard God the Father say at our Lord’s transfiguration, “Listen to Him.” Today our attention is diverted from the Holy Spirit as He means to tell us, “It is all about Jesus!”

In Jesus, the glory of God has come to enlighten our dark world and lives. In Jesus, the water of eternal life makes us alive forevermore. Remember the Christmas angels singing “Glory to God in the highest”? Then His true glory shined forth from the cross of His atoning suffering and death for us. Now the glory of His resurrection is made known in the living Word of God as it is spoken in many languages the world over and distributed through the Holy Sacraments. Now the only thing left is our final glorification, being raised completely to that new life on the day of our resurrection.

First Reading, Numbers 11:24–30

(Moses prays for the Spirit upon all.)

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” ²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” ²⁹ But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” ³⁰ And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

Second Reading, Acts 2:1–21

(The coming of the Holy Spirit)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter's Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,

blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,

before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Holy Gospel, John 7:37–39

(Rivers of living water)

³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.