



Pentecost Sunday, May 30th, 2004

Readings

Acts 2:1-11

1 Corinthians 12:3-7,12-13 or Romans 8:8-17

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

Dates to Remember

May 31: Memorial Day in the United States

June 1: Stand for Children Day

Quotes

"The Church herself will never cease putting questions, trusting in the help of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth."

Pope John Paul II

"Let us, then, pray with all fervor for this peace which our divine Redeemer came to bring us. May Christ banish from the souls of all whatever might endanger peace. May Christ transform all people into witnesses of truth, justice and love. May Christ illumine with light the minds of rulers, so that, besides caring for the proper material welfare of their peoples, they may also guarantee them the fairest gift of peace.

Finally, may Christ inflame the desires of all people to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong. Through Christ's power and inspiration may all peoples welcome each other to their hearts as brothers and sisters, and may the peace they long for ever flower and ever reign among them."

Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, #171

"Finding one's own voice, however haltingly, imparts the power of the Spirit crying out. The boldness to hear the claim of conscience and follow its deep impulses even in the face of loss; the courage to taste righteous anger and allow it to motivate critical resistance to evil; the willingness to utter the prophetic word--these occurrences inscribe the movement of the Spirit's compassion into the ambiguity of the world."

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, *She Who Is*, p. 126

"Whenever a human community resists its own destruction or works for its own renewal; when structural changes serve the liberation of oppressed peoples; when law subverts sexism, racism, poverty, and militarism; when swords are beaten into ploughshares or bombs into food for the starving; when the scores of old injustices are healed; when enemies are reconciled once violence and domination have ceased; whenever the lies and the raping and the killing stop; wherever diversity is sustained in *koinônia*; wherever justice and peace and freedom gain a transformative foothold--there the living presence of powerful, blessing mystery amid the brokenness of the world is mediated."

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, *She Who Is*, p.126

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, defend the rights of those who have nothing. Speak up and judge fairly, and defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Proverbs 31: 8-9

Thoughts for your Consideration

The coming of the Spirit transforms the Christian community:

- Locked doors are opened.
- Fear is replaced by courage.
- Peace is proclaimed.
- The power to forgive sins is shared.
- Those who were afraid now speak up boldly.
- Thousands hear the message in their own language.

The Gifts of the Spirit are diverse and belong to the whole community. These gifts are meant for liberation to be enjoyed by all. We might say that the Spirit is an inclusive spirit who desires to set everyone free.

Our contemporary world certainly needs the gifts of the spirit:

- We need to unlock the closed doors and hearts that exclude people and that lead to racism, ethnic conflicts, and military rivalries.
- We need the gift of peace to help us put an end to war, violence and terrorism.
- We need God's help so that we can forgive the sins that keep us from moving on to new and better things for our society.
- We need the courage to drop our fears and speak up for what is right for all God's children.

Maybe the greatest manifestation of the spirit is when people have the grace to identify with the needs and struggles of the world, to listen to those who are poor or oppressed, and to **speak up**. As Elizabeth Johnson says above: "Finding one's own voice, however haltingly, imparts the power of Spirit crying out."

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

When have you had the ability or the courage to speak up in a difficult situation? What happened? What were the results? What did you learn?

Links

- Memorial Day is May 31st. This holiday came into being in the United States soon after the Civil War ended as a special day to honor the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers. Within 20 years, it became a holiday dedicated to the memory of all war dead. For more information, go to the following web site address: <http://www.usmemorialday.org/backgrnd.html>.
- Stand for Children Day is June 1st. For information, visit the Stand for Children Web Site, <http://www.stand.org/standday/default.asp>.

Prayers

The Grace to Shout

Today we ask the grace to shout when it hurts, even though silence is expected of us,
and to listen when others shout though it be painful to hear;
to object, to protest, when we feel, taste, or observe injustice,
believing that even the unjust and arrogant
are human nonetheless and therefore worthy of strong efforts to reach them.

Take from us, Guiding God, the heart of despair and fill us with courage and understanding.

Give us a self that knows very well when the moment has come to protest.

We ask the grace to be angry when the weakest are the first to be exploited
and the trapped are squeezed for their meager resources,
when the most deserving are the last to thrive, and the privileged demand more privilege.

We ask for the inspiration to make our voice heard
when we have something that needs to be said,
something that rises to our lips despite our shyness.

And we ask the grace to listen when the meek finally rise to speak and their words are an agony for us . . .

William Cleary, Psalm Services For Group Prayer

Center of Concern
<http://www.coc.org>
1225 Otis Street, N.E.
Washington DC 20017-2516
Telephone: (202) 635 2757
Fax: (202) 832 9494

Come Holy Spirit. Come! Fill the hearts of your people.

Come Holy Spirit, that we may be aware; aware of the people around us,
especially the poor and oppressed;
aware of the children, the young people, all the people striving to grow into their dignity as children of God;
aware of the world around us, especially the environment with its plants and animals, with its land and water,
with its air and space, with all its mystery;
aware of the structures of power, especially those that keep people impoverished or powerless or confused
or unfree;
aware of the violence and the threats of violence, which are not the way of Jesus;
aware of our selves and our bias and stereotypes and all our unfreedom;
aware of all the possibilities for freedom and joy and life.

Come Holy Spirit. Come! Fill the hearts of your people. Give us the freedom to see. Give us the wisdom and
courage to speak.

Amen.

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-Fr. John Bucki, SJ, Editor and Writer

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