

Pentecost, Year B

GOSPEL

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Jesus said to his disciples:

‘When the Advocate comes,
whom I shall send to you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father,
he will be my witness.
And you too will be witnesses,
because you have been with me from the outset.

‘I still have many things to say to you
but they would be too much for you now.
But when the Spirit of truth comes
he will lead you to the complete truth,
since he will not be speaking as from himself
but will say only what he has learnt;
and he will tell you of the things to come.
He will glorify me,
since all he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.
Everything the Father has is mine;
that is why I said:
*All he tells you
will be taken from what is mine.*

(John 15:26–27; 16:12–15)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The reason why the disciples were in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost was that they were celebrating the Jewish Harvest Festival, which occurs fifty days after the Passover. This festival also celebrated the covenant made by God with the people of Israel on Mount Sinai.
- The Christian feast of Pentecost is fifty days after Easter Sunday and marks the culmination and closure of the Lent–Easter–Pentecost cycle.
- The word for ‘spirit’ in Hebrew is the feminine *ruah*, meaning literally ‘breath’, ‘wind’ or ‘air.’

EXPLORING THE WORD

This text again comes from the farewell discourse of Jesus to the disciples in John’s Gospel. In it he promises to send the Advocate to them. An advocate is one who stands by in times of trial or difficulty, defending, guiding and instructing. In many ways, the Spirit is the ongoing presence of Jesus with his disciples in all ages, and these texts give an eloquent instruction on the reason for God’s gift of the Spirit. The Spirit will witness to the truth, which comes from the Father through the Son. The Spirit will guide the Church’s future understandings as they gradually unfold. The Spirit will be the link between the Father, the now absent Son and the ongoing unfolding of the complete truth. The Spirit will inspire the followers of Jesus to continue his mission and will provide assistance and guidance in achieving this. No single set of human beings could completely know the implications of the Christ event. It is the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth, sent by Jesus from the Father, who will accompany the Church through the whole of history, guiding it towards the complete truth.

- What evidence has there been in your own life of the Spirit guiding you towards an ever-unfolding understanding of the complete truth of Jesus Christ?
- How do you experience the presence of the Spirit in your life at the moment?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Are there people you still have ‘many things to say to’? Is it important that such things are said?
- In what ways have you been led to the complete truth?
- How do you experience the Spirit present in your life?
- The first reading tells of the experience of the disciples receiving the Spirit. They were astounded by what had happened to them, and it produced a change in them as people. Share stories of times you have been ‘blown away’ by something. Did the experience produce lasting change? How have you kept this feeling alive?
- The Spirit is bestowed at baptism and ‘confirmed’ for us. Galatians 5:22 lists the fruits of the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Try to live these fruits this week.
- Today’s gospel acclamation makes a wonderful prayer for this week:

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful;
And kindle in them the fire of your love.*

