

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

PENTECOST

SUNDAY, Year B
May 23, 2021

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**Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor**

**Our Sunday Masses are now held inside the Church, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM.
Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing.**

1st Reading: **Acts 2:1-11**

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, 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 Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm:

"Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth."

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord, my God, you are great indeed! How manifold are your works, O Lord! the earth is full of your creatures.

R.
May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord be glad in his works! Pleasing to him be my theme; I will be glad in the Lord.

R.
If you take away their breath, they perish and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.
R.

2nd Reading: **Galatians 5:16-25**

Brothers and sisters, live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit,

you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, lust, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

**Lector: Alleluia, Alleluia.
All: Alleluia, Alleluia.**

**Lector: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
All: Alleluia, Alleluia.**

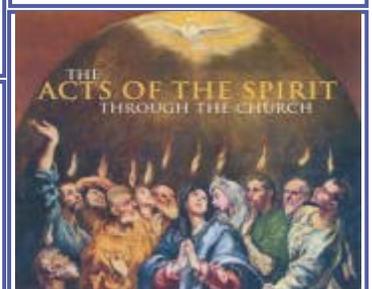
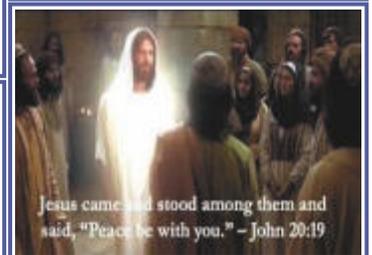
The Mystery of Faith:

**When we eat this Bread,
and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death,
O Lord, until you come
again.**

Gospel Reading: **John 20:19-23**

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." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord.



REFLECTING ON THE WORD GUIDEPOSTS

The Christian faith or Christianity was born on Easter Sunday, when the Risen Christ breathed his Spirit on his disciples clustered in the upper room out of fear, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." We belong to this faith through baptism. Baptism is the sacrament by which is effected Christ's breathing of his Spirit unto us. And what we celebrate today, Pentecost Sunday, is our becoming a Church. Thus this day has been referred to as the birthday of the Church. It is a reminder that we become a true Church only if we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus in us, as it is the Holy Spirit that binds us together as Church — the mystical Body of Christ, in the same way that in the life of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the bond of love between the Father and the Son, making them a community.

Today is Pentecost Sunday. *Pentecost* is a Greek word that means the fiftieth day. What we celebrate today then is what happened 50 days after the Lord Jesus resurrected and breathed his Spirit into his disciples. Or to put it more exactly, what happened when after 50 days the apostles finally opened themselves 100 % (so to say), to the Holy Spirit as they were faced with how to execute the command of Christ to proclaim forgiveness of sins. Thus there was a great display of the power of the Holy Spirit as the new manner of God's presence in the life of believers: "*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim*" (Acts 2:4).

Unpacking "PENTECOST:"

Luke's narrative in the Acts gives the impression that Pentecost was rather unexpected. Luke's story could lead us to believe that the disciples went through an instantaneous transformation: receiving the Spirit, speaking in tongues, then preaching effectively to a multi-cultural crowd.

In reality, that which seemed to happen in an instant was the effect of the appearances of the risen Lord during 40 days after the resurrection, prayer, and discernment. Instead of a miraculous conversion, it took the apostles 50 days of communal prayer and discernment to open their hearts and minds to the Holy Spirit that had been in them since Easter Sunday.

The apostles, together with Mary — Jesus' mother and some others, were back in Jerusalem for the Jewish feast of Pentecost. This time they finally opened themselves to the Holy Spirit, and people from all over Jerusalem could hear them proclaiming their faith. Obviously the doors and windows were all open now! Like the wind, the force of the Holy Spirit could not be contained.

With *Pentecost*, we have reached the end of the Easter season. We may say that now **JESUS works from home (heaven), and the HOLY SPIRIT is the front liner (works from within us).**

Formula for Solving Life's Problems: Work with the Holy Spirit.

The entirety of the Acts of the Apostles as well as the letters of Paul demonstrate that it was not easy for the disciples to adjust to the fact that the Spirit works through each individual believer, whether Greek, Jew, slave, free, woman or man. Knowing how much they would have to grow, **Jesus had forewarned them that they had much to learn, but that they would only be able to bear it when they were guided by the Spirit of truth.**

Re: The Second Reading

One of my favorite New Testament texts is Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 5, from which our second reading today is taken. When I am asked, "Fr. George, how do I know what God wants me to do? How do I know I am walking the right path?" and similar questions, my response always includes a recommendation to read and meditate on Galatians chapter 5.

As a fruit of today's liturgy, I recommend dear parishioners, that within today or within this week, you spend some of your precious alone time and read again today's second reading and focus on the two passages, namely: the works of the flesh in contrast to the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Are these things happening to you? What are the signs that the Holy Spirit is in you?

The following oft-quoted native American story may drive the point home:

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "My son, the battle is between two wolves inside us all."

"One is EVIL — It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego."

"The other is GOOD -- It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf wins?" The old Cherokee simply replied: **THE ONE YOU FEED.**

The Jewish Feast of Pentecost

The word Pentecost is derived from the Greek word for 50 and referred to a feast celebrated 50 days after Passover. It is believed to have been originally an agricultural harvest feast. In the course of time it began to be celebrated as the anniversary of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai and one of the three most important feasts of the Jewish people. Devout Jews that lived in other nations would come to Jerusalem to celebrate their birth as God's chosen people. That's why there were so many people in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus' disciples.

The number 50 has great symbolic importance. It marks a jubilee: seven weeks of years culminate in a 50th year when debts are cancelled, slaves are freed, and everyone celebrates God's mercy.

Forgiving and retaining sins:

The disciples are also commissioned to forgive sins or to retain sins. In the Gospel of John, *sin* refers to the rejection of Jesus as the revelation of God. Rejecting this divine revelation is a sin. This will be a struggle not only for Jews but also for all others who are seeking to be followers of Jesus.

Let's Activate OUR SENSE OF HUMOR

It is said that during June a lot of people get married. Here are three stories about marriage:



A little boy asked his father "Daddy, how much does it cost to get married? Dad replied, "I don't know, son. I'm still paying.

A lady put an ad in the newspaper that read, "Husband wanted." The next day she got 200 answers to her ad. They all said the same thing. "You can have mine."

A husband read an article to his wife about how many words women use a day as opposed to how many times men say; --30,000 to a man's 15,000. The wife replied, "The reason has to be because we have to repeat everything to men." The husband turned to his wife and said: "What?"

Let us pray for one another, especially for **Gordon Osborne, Amelia Lopez Ortiz, and Susan Muñoz**, that God may restore them to health.



"We should pray as if everything depended on God and act as if everything depended on ourselves."

— St. Augustine.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

CELEBRANT:

Sealed in the Spirit, let us turn to God with the needs of a world crying out for renewal.

LECTOR:

1) For all Christians, that renewed in the Holy Spirit we may always seek unity as one body in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

2) That the peace the Holy Spirit brings may pervade the entire world so that nations never again settle their differences by taking up arms against each other and that local authorities are able to maintain peace without resorting to violence, let us pray to the Lord.

3) For all who have lost hope—the single parent working two jobs and raising her children, the homeless person living on the streets, the prisoner serving a life sentence, the patient living with a chronic illness—that they may be comforted through the work of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

4) That we may recognize the gifts of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and each other and that we may encourage and use those gifts to extend peace, mercy, and love to those most in need, let us pray to the Lord.

5) For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

CELEBRANT:

Generous God, your gift of the Holy Spirit, who remains with us always, transforms our lives each day. Help us to realize your wonderful gifts as we ask you to satisfy our needs through your Son, Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

A Message from Bishop McElroy:

It is vitally important that all of us receive the Covid vaccine. The Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are safe and effective. They are fully approved for use at this moment by the teachings of our Church. And as Pope Francis has so clearly taught, receiving the vaccine is not only for ourselves as individuals. It is for everyone that we treasure, to keep them safe and healthy and bring back the joy of life to us all.

..... The sooner we are all vaccinated, the sooner we will be able to return to the many joys of our lives that we have missed during this past year of suffering. The vaccines, with our continued masking and social distancing during the coming months, will bring this hateful pandemic to an end."



May 15-16 Sunday Collections:
\$ 873.00

Mother's Day Novena: \$ 208
Via Online: May 12 to May 19:
\$ 345.00



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