

Breaking Open the Word: Death to Life to Action

Pentecost: 05 June 2022

BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

1st Reading Acts 2:1-11; 2nd Reading is from St Paul's 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Romans 8:8-17. Today's Gospel is John 20:19-23 or John 14:15-16, 23b-26. The complete Readings can be found at [USCCB Readings](#). Each of the Readings can be read or simply the Gospel.

While someone reads the Scripture(s) out loud, listen well. Be aware of the image being painted, or the story being told. How does the story or the image call to mind anything similar in your own life or experience?

Discussing Baptism and the Holy Spirit can be some of the most obtuse (confusing) discussions there can be! The difference between John the Baptist's Baptism (for repentance) and the Baptism of Jesus (receiving the Holy Spirit) (Acts 19:1-8) and then the Trinitarian Baptism (Matthew 28) have been Christian sticking points for an eon or three. Is Baptism about "life," "life and death," or "life, death, resurrection and action?" Today's Readings (combined), and alternates, challenge us to respond to the third option.

✓ *Tell of a time that you were so surprised or dumbfounded by something that you just could not speak clearly about. What caused the utter surprise for you? How long did it take you to "adjust" to the event?*

We are accustomed to hearing/describing Pentecost as being marked by a "heavy wind" and "flames of fire" over the disciples'/apostles' heads. But the text in Acts uses metaphors to describe those two experiences. The witnesses didn't know what they experienced and could only use symbol-speak.

✓ *What metaphor might help to explain the surprise you experienced? or a metaphor describing your reaction?*

or

✓ *When have you relied on metaphor to describe an experience, feeling or emotion?*

In the Reading from Acts of the Apostles, Luke describes the ability of the Disciples/Apostles to communicate with people of different cultures without a common language.

✓ *What experience have you had with understanding or communicating with someone despite not having a "common language?" What enabled you to communicate with each other?*

✓ *When have you "talked passed" someone even though you were actually both speaking a common language? What caused the fusion?*

In Baptism, as described in the Readings, and in Confirmation, as we celebrate it, we teach and believe that the Holy Spirit comes **TO EACH INDIVIDUAL** and **THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT IS GIVEN FOR SOME BENEFIT**. (The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon [us]: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD and [our] delight shall be the fear of the LORD)

✓ *How have you experienced the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in your life? ...in the lives of others? (Describe by a metaphor, in a sketch or poem.)*

✓ *How have the Gifts of the Holy Spirit been a "BENEFIT" for you to respond to situations in your life?*

✓ *How might your life, influenced by the Gifts of the Spirit, impact your family life, your impact on your workplace/school or your understanding of the social issues of our time and where you interact?*

Intercessions

Reader 2: Father in heaven, you have called us to gather at this table as the body of Christ and to be filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit. **All:** Through this sharing of agape, give us strength to serve you in our actions.

Leader 1: Lord our God, remember pope Francis, our bishop (*name*), and all Church leaders.

Fill Christians with the Spirit of Pentecost. **All:** Help us bring your hope to people who are sorrowful.

Reader 2: Bring together people who walk in your Spirit, **All:** to live as one with Christ as we have been called.

Reader 1: Accompany people serving victims of violence and war. **All:** Well up your gifts of wisdom and awareness of right judgement within them as they heal to wholeness those they serve.

[other intercessions]

All: Our Father!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!