

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Pentecost Sunday

Today we pray: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful, and renew the face of the Earth. How many of us take this to heart? How many of us feel the presence of the Spirit in our hearts as we go through our daily routine? Some have noted that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten Person of the Blessed Trinity. Yet the Spirit is God living among us and within us. All the time, God as the Holy Spirit dwells in us as an active source of inspiration and empowerment. Each year we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples. Each year we are reminded that the Holy Spirit has also come to us. Are we aware of this happening? Does it make a difference in our lives?

A Gospel Word for the Home John 20:19-23

While today's Gospel reading is brief, it is packed with meaning. The disciples have locked themselves in a room. They have locked out the world. They feel safe and secure, but in a sense they are captive to their own fear. This is not how God wants them to be. So through the barricades they have erected, the Holy Spirit enters in the Person of Jesus. How did he get in? The door was locked. We know the answer. God in Jesus will not be kept out. God through Jesus wants to dwell in our hearts. So, just as God did at the first creation by breathing over the chaos to create the ordered universe, so does Jesus breathe over them and the Spirit "orders" their lives. And what are they "ordered" to do? Go out into the world and make available to everyone the gift of God's forgiveness: free people to live without fear.

How do we know when we're not afraid? We know this when we can feel deep peacefulness within. That means that the peace of God dwells in us. Inner peace is a basic symptom of God's presence within us. And God desires us to possess this inner calm. But we have to really want it.

Thought for the Week

Sometimes our family homes are not considered places of peacefulness. Families portrayed in the media often live frantic and fearful lives. They are caught up in the frenzy of contemporary life. They are on the go with crowded schedules. When peace is sought, we might think that we have to leave home. Go out in nature. Find a quiet church. Walk on the beach. And while this is good, why don't we also seek peace **at** home? Maybe we have to work at finding peace at home. Here are some ways we might do this. First, believe it can happen. If we have already ruled out any sense of deep peacefulness, or any sense that home can be a place of prayer, we have already lost the battle. God's Spirit came to the first disciples in a closed room. They were fearful and stressed until the Spirit came into them. We cannot say this is a one-time event. Our Christian lives are to be Spirit-filled.

—by David Thomas, PhD, Co-Director, The Bethany Family Institute

Parent Survival

Once we have initially accepted that God **can** be with us in our family life then we'll need some quiet time to let God's Spirit be known and felt by us. That means turning off the noise that prevents spiritual awareness. Do that and see what happens. Like the first disciples, we might be quite surprised.

Know too that we are not talking here about spiritual perfection. Acquiring an awareness of God, or signs of God's presence, happens in tiny increments, like the feeling of inner peace. So experiencing a small measure of peace where once fear or stress ruled is a huge gain. Notice and treasure those small advances.

Car or Meal Talk

Discuss among yourselves times when you felt God's peace within.

One-Line Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, come live within us.
Amen.