



Bringing Home the Word

Sixth Sunday of Easter | May 21, 2017

Powered by the Spirit

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Taken by the story of the saint and the old movie (not so old then) *The Song of Bernadette*, I took Bernadette as my confirmation name. The sister who taught us in fifth grade had talked about saints as people we wanted to be like—our heroes who were constantly before God in heaven and looking out for us on earth. She also talked about the Holy Spirit and the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, which we had to memorize.

I confess I was far more interested in getting the new name and curious about the light slap on the cheek from the bishop that would herald the arrival of the aforementioned Holy Spirit.

We're a couple of weeks from the celebration of Pentecost, and today's readings begin to tell us how the Holy Spirit enabled Jesus' followers to do miraculous things and helped them witness to their faith in Christ.

Jesus calls the Holy Spirit the Advocate, which is a legal term, but it can also mean spokesperson, comforter, or intercessor.

One thing is certain: The Spirit witnesses to the truth of Christ, who lives in us and with us. The Holy Spirit guides and teaches the Church, which is the body of Christ. In confirmation, the grace of the Spirit becomes fully manifested in us, enabling us to tell the world that we follow Jesus and have become new people in Christ.

The saints who were our heroes and our namesakes allowed the Spirit of God to change their lives so they were more like Jesus. No wonder we were invited to be like them.

Maybe it's time to work on that again. †

Christ lives in us.

A Word From Pope Francis

The new things which God gives to our lives are lasting, not only in the future, when we will be with him, but today as well. God is even now making all things new; the Holy Spirit is truly transforming us, and through us he also wants to transform the world in which we live. Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us!

—Homily, Mass and conferral of the sacrament of confirmation, April 28, 2013



Sunday Readings

Acts 8:5–8, 14–17

"With one accord, the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing."

1 Peter 3:15–18

"For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God."

John 14:15–21

"But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What saints do you look to as role models for living your life?
- How do you let the Holy Spirit move, and live, and grow through you?



An Adequate Response

By Fr. Donald Willard, CSsR

The Holy Spirit is often described as the bond of love that exists between

the Father and the Son. The mutual self-donational and self-communicative intimate bond between the Father and the Son is so perfect that perfect love exists between the two. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father and the Son. This divine mystery occurs because the goodness of God must be communicated and shared.

But the Most Holy Trinity must

communicate its goodness. This explains the existence of the whole of creation. It affords a place for the Most Holy Trinity to communicate its goodness and share God's divine life. We are then called into existence out of pure love. Humanity has the capacity to receive and enter into a relationship with divine love. We also have the capacity to communicate, share, and love the Most Holy Trinity.

This is the call to holiness and wholeness in the life of every person, the call to respond to the love of God poured into our hearts. There is only one proper response to a God who would give

himself up to us and even die for us—the gift of self. We give ourselves in loving service to the one who gave himself in loving service to us.

Holiness is setting oneself aside for the purposes of God. We realize our lives are not our own. We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. And so we are bound to God and offer ourselves in service to our sisters and brothers, who are also the children of God. This service in love brings us wholeness at both a personal and communal level. †

Source: *Liguorian*,
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Responding to the Presence of Spirit

By John Gresham

The Catechism of the Catholic Church lists several ways in which we come to know the Holy Spirit within the Church (CCC 688). First on the list is sacred Scripture, which the Spirit inspires. We grow in our relationship to the Spirit by hearing and responding to the voice of the Spirit speaking through the biblical writings.

After Scripture, the *Catechism* lists Tradition and the magisterium as places we encounter the Holy Spirit. Reading the writings of the early Church fathers and studying the first Church councils, I was struck by the beauty and wisdom in their writings. I began to recognize

Tradition as the Holy Spirit leading us into a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ.

After Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterium, the *Catechism* mentions the sacramental liturgy as a place we come to know the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit prepares us for the liturgy. In silence and prayer before Mass, we can receive this work of the Spirit, who will inspire faith and desire in our hearts.

Next, the Spirit recalls the events and meaning of Christ's coming. Through the readings, homily, and prayers of the Mass, Christ is manifested to us by the Holy Spirit as we recall what he has done for us. The Spirit makes that event present. Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ.

As we receive Christ in holy

Communion, that same Spirit transforms us into members of the body of Christ. Responding to the energy of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy, we are transformed to become more like Christ in his love for God and others. †

Source: *Liguorian*, © May 2014, Liguori Publications



Holy Spirit, who is the love of the Father and the Son given to me at my baptism and confirmation, help me to activate the gifts and life given to me by hearing your voice more attentively, embracing it more lovingly and persevering in it more generously. Amen.

— Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

WEEKDAY READINGS

May 22–27

Mon. Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:11–15 / Jn 15:26–16:4a

Tue. Easter Weekday:
Acts 16:22–34 / Jn 16:5–11

Wed. Easter Weekday:
Acts 17:15, 22–18:1 / Jn 16:12–15

Thu. Easter Weekday:
Acts 18:1–8 / Jn 16:16–20

Fri. St. Philip Neri:
Acts 18:9–18 / Jn 16:20–23

Sat. Easter Weekday:
Acts 18:23–28 / Jn 16:23b–28