

## *ctkAlive! Scripture Study* Pentecost Sunday 2021—B Cycle



“Pentecost”  
by [Anthonis Van Dyck](#)  
(1599-1641)

*Gender usage in writing: We are conscious of gender references to God in the Scripture texts. Often, attempts to rewrite these passages result in awkward sentence structures. We have left the biblical translations as they are but do our best to be inclusive in all other parts of the reflection.*

### **Opening Prayer**

*(edited and abridged for use here)*

### **Prayer for the Fire of the Spirit**

Lord Jesus, the outpouring  
of your Holy Spirit on Pentecost  
drastically changed the lives of the disciples.

May the burning fire of your Holy Spirit refine  
and renew me, so that I will never be the same.

May I move in the power of the Spirit,  
and may my life and ministries be infused  
with Your divine, supernatural touch and authority.

May the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation  
cause me to grow in my knowledge of You.  
Amen.

Source: [ConnectUS](#)

### **Pentecost Sunday Readings**

Feast of Pentecost

Acts 2: 1-11 “Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire.”

Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-31, 34 “Lord, send out your spirit and renew the face of the earth.”

I Corinthians 12: 3-7, 12-13 “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.”

John 20: 19-23 “Receive the Holy Spirit . . .”

### **A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2: 1-11)**

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. And suddenly, out of the sky, came a sound, like a strong rushing wind. It filled the whole house where they were sitting. There appeared tongues, as if of fire, which parted and came to rest upon each one of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

Staying in Jerusalem were religious Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered, all excited, because each heard them speaking in his own language. Full of amazement and wonder, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it, that we hear them in our own native language? Here are Parthians, Medes and Elamites; and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia; Pontus and Asia; Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt; and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene; and visitors from Rome; both Jews and foreigners who accept Jewish beliefs, Cretans and Arabians; and all of us hear them proclaiming in our own language what God, the Savior, does.’”

### **Personal Reflection**



*Image source: [Shavuot on Gateway Center for Israel](#)*

The Jewish calendar celebrates Pentecost (Shavuot) as one of its greatest annual feasts. Jews remember it as the day when Yahweh gave them the gift of the Law on Sinai—a divine Covenant with the chosen people, the “Israel of God.” Originally a harvest celebration, later Shavuot evolved into an occasion of general celebration. Many Jews traveled from their Eastern Mediterranean countries on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. During the Jewish Passover, they commemorated the liberation from slavery in Egypt. Jesus offered the whole world freedom from death and sin by his death and resurrection.

- *What does the feast of Pentecost mean to me—really? What can I do to make it more than just another (ho-hum) feast day in the Church calendar?*
- *How do I explain the Pentecost phenomenon of foreigners understanding the Apostles and disciples whose native tongue was the local Aramaic dialect of Hebrew? What do I think about the gift of “speaking other languages”—or “in tongues”? If I have prayed this way myself, when was that and under what circumstances?*

“There appeared tongues, as if of fire, which parted and came to rest upon each one of them.” It may be many years since I received the Sacrament of Confirmation, but the presence of the Holy Spirit should still cause me to “glow.”

- *What signs do I see in myself that I still have some “glow” left in me that marks me as a baptized and confirmed Catholic/Christian?*

## **Responsorial Psalm 104 (1, 24, 29-31, 34)**

God's boundless care for creation: a psalm of worship.

*Lord, send out your spirit  
and renew the face of the earth.*

Praise Yahweh, my soul!  
Clothed in majesty and splendor;  
O Yahweh, my God, how great you are.

*Lord, send out your spirit  
and renew the face of the earth.*

How varied, O Yahweh, are your works!  
In wisdom you have made them all—  
the earth, full of your creatures.

*Lord, send out your spirit  
and renew the face of the earth.*

When you hide your face, they vanish;  
you take away their breath,  
they expire and return to dust.

*Lord, send out your spirit  
and renew the face of the earth.*

When you send forth your spirit, they are created,  
and the face of the earth is renewed.

May my song give him pleasure,  
as Yahweh gives me delight.

*Lord, send out your spirit  
and renew the face of the earth.*

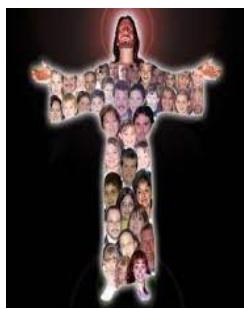
### Personal Reflection

As Christians, we do not consider religion as a strictly personal affair between God and our own souls. We are part of the created world which God also made and loves. The first chapter of Genesis describes creation in a series of seven brief phrases. Psalm 104 paints its own creation account in loving detail. The psalmist speaks of the world, as he saw it. When we pray this psalm, we include the world as we know it—a much more complex amalgam of peoples than the psalmist knew—but with the same delight and awe as our Jewish ancestors.

“May my song give God pleasure, as Yahweh gives me delight.” The post-Exile composer of Psalm 104 must have sung and played a musical instrument (or more). He prayed as he—or could it have been “she”?—sang. Each day we add another note to the psalm of our life. For the past two weeks the Scriptures have called for us to sing a new song through the way we live each day.

- *What indications do I have that I direct my life-song to God each day? How might I tweak my daily song to keep it fresh and not the “same old same old.”*
- *To what extent do I keep my faith strictly to myself? How would friends, neighbors, and coworkers know that I am a person of deep faith?*

### **A Reading from St. Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians (12: 3-7, 12-13)**



*Image source:  
[The Church as the Body of Christ](#)*

“I tell you that no one inspired by the Spirit of God may say, ‘A curse on Jesus,’ as no one can say, ‘Jesus is the Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit. There is diversity of gifts, but the Spirit is the same.

“There is diversity of ministries, but the Lord is the same. There is diversity of works, but the same God works in all. The Spirit reveals his presence in each one with a gift that is also a service.

“As the body is one, having many members, and all the members, while being many, form one body, so it is with Christ. All of us, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, have been baptized in one Spirit, to form one body, and all of us have been given, to drink from the one Spirit.”

### **Personal Reflection**

Listen to [John Michael Talbot’s](#) rendition of “[One Bread, One Body](#).”

Comparison with the human body—many pieces and parts working together to sustain life—helps us to understand the true nature of the Church we profess as our guide to the Risen Christ. This comparison also shows us how to respect and value other members of the one body of Christ. We cannot achieve true community unless we place our talents at the service of others. Even the seemingly less gifted among us may possess riches of talent waiting to reveal themselves at the right time. As soon as someone commits to living a Christian life, the Spirit awakens in them new and sometimes unsuspected capabilities. Sadly, many of us Christians/Catholics misuse or surrender our gifts, causing great harm to self and others.

- *What are my recognizable gifts as a human being and a Christian? How do I apply them to my own life story and to my mission with Christ to make the world a better place for all?*
- *What different communities do I belong to? How good am I at community building in and through my daily life experiences? What benefits do I derive from each of my current communities? What services do I render to my communities? How might I do more?*

## Proclamation from the Gospel according to John (20: 19-23)

“On the evening of that day, the first day after the Sabbath, the doors were locked where the disciples were, because of their fear of the Jews. But Jesus came, and stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you!’ Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples, seeing the Lord, were full of joy. Again Jesus said to them, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’

“After saying this, he breathed on them, and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit! Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained.’”

### Personal Reflection

In the Genesis creation stories, God infused (breathed) life into Adam. In the same way, Jesus’ breath communicates life to his new spiritual creation, his body—the Church. Christ, who died to take away the sin, shares with his community the power to forgive. Old Testament Jews offered animals in the temple to appease their offended God. In the person of the Risen Christ, a new way of living and loving has begun, even though humanity—ourselves—may continue to sin. In this, we stand in the presence of the great mystery of life as lived from one day to the next . . . and one generation to the next throughout history.

“The doors were locked where the disciples were, because of their fear of the Jews.”

— *When have I ever “locked the doors” of my inner life to keep the Risen Christ from finding me? Why did I not want to be found? How successful was I in keeping Jesus away from my locked heart?*

— *Does any part of my life remain blocked off from God? What is it? Why am I hiding from the one who already knows “when I sit and when I stand” (Psalm 139, v. 2)? What would it take for me to unlock that futile barrier?*

### The Week Ahead

#### Journaling Prompts

— *Based on this weekend’s Scripture readings, what does the Risen Christ ask me to do regarding . . .*

*(1) the quality of the love I bring to my personal relationships . . . and  
(2) my life as an emissary of the Risen Christ, committed to bringing his kind of love to the people with whom I interact in person and on social media?*

— *Who this week needs to hear from me some expression of love?  
Who needs to receive from me a moment of laughter and personal concern?  
Why do I hesitate?*

Take some time to write about your experience and feelings about events occurring in your life today and what you see happening in the world.

### For Inspirational Listening/Reading

#### Music:

“[Holy Spirit Rain Down](#),” sung by [Heritage Singers](#), composer [Russell Fragar](#).

Just for the heck of it, treat yourself to [Dolly Parton’s](#) inspiring “[Coat of Many Colors](#).”

#### Video:

“[The Holy Spirit](#)”—Bishop Barron discusses what the Spirit of God means.

### Preview of Next Week’s Scriptures

Feast of the Most Holy Trinity

Deuteronomy 4: 32-34, 39-40 “Fix in your heart that the Lord is God.”

Psalm 33: 4-6, 9, 18-22 “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made.”

Romans 8: 14-17 “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God.”

Matthew 28: 16-20 “Go, make disciples of all nations.”

### Closing Prayer

*(edited for use here)*

### **A Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

by [St. Augustine of Hippo](#) (AD 354-430)

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may be holy.  
Act in me, O Holy Spirit  
that my works, too, may be holy.  
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,  
that I love only what is holy.  
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit  
to defend all that is holy.  
Guard me then, O Holy Spirit,  
that I may always be holy.  
Amen.

Source: [The Prayerist](#)

### Questions?

Send any questions or comments you might have to [algarrotto@comcast.net](mailto:algarrotto@comcast.net)

The Sunday readings are from [\*Christian Community Bible: Catholic Pastoral Edition\*](#)

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(follow this link to my spiritual novel, [\*Bishop Myriel: In His Own Words\*](#))