

## HAPPY PENTECOST: "RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT." (John 20:22)

**Happy Pentecost! Jesus breathed on the Disciples and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"** (John 20:22). At every Mass on **Pentecost Sunday**, we have the opportunity to hear the inspiring Gospel of John when the Risen Lord appears for the first time to the disciples on the evening of Easter Sunday (John 20:19-23). Mary Magdalene had just told them that she had seen the Lord as she had been weeping near the empty tomb, and that the Lord asked her to tell the disciples that he was going to ascend to the Father (John 20: 11-18). Shortly after they heard this amazing news, they were still hiding, unbelieving, in the upper room together with the doors locked for fear of the Jews. This is the moment when Jesus appeared in his unbelieving and glorified body, stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you**", and then showed them his hands and his side. Can you imagine their immense **joy**? Jesus had risen from the dead! Now they believe as they can see Jesus in his glorified body. Then, he is **sending** them as the Father had sent him. Do you believe in the Risen Lord without seeing him with your own eyes? Can you hear Jesus inviting you to go as His disciples to proclaim the Good News of the Risen Lord? All of us are called to proclaim the good news of the Resurrection to everyone we encounter. All of us are called to be true disciples of Christ, like the first 11 Apostles (the word apostles come from the Greek word meaning "being sent").

You may begin to ask yourselves: why is this Gospel proclaimed on every Pentecost Sunday? Does it not fit better on Easter Sunday, when we celebrate the day our Lord rises from the dead? Wait to hear the second part of this short and most powerful passage from John's Gospel. What is Jesus going to do after those first words of consoling the disciples, who had lost all hope and who, with the exception of John, had not dared to follow Jesus to Calvary and to be with him as he was dying for all of us on the Cross on Good Friday? They were afraid of being arrested by the Romans and then being put to death like Jesus. Think about all the times you have been afraid of defending your Christian Faith and did not speak up to proclaim the Truth, who is Jesus himself. No one else but Jesus is totally **one with the Father in Heaven**. No one else but **Jesus is "Peace"**.

Right after this joy of encountering the Risen Lord, the disciples, and all of us today as followers of Jesus, are not prepared for what Jesus is going to do... **He breathes on us and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit!"** This is what the **Pentecost feast is all about**. Jesus breathes on us. Can you feel the power that Jesus is giving you at this very moment? Can you recall the day of your own confirmation when the Bishop, representing Jesus Christ, prays over you with his hands extended and then anoints your forehead with the **chrism oil**, a consecrated oil, to make the sign of the cross on your forehead while breathing upon you saying your

confirmation name and the following powerful words: "**Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit**"? Then you responded "**Amen**" (I believe I am receiving the Holy Spirit) and the Bishop then says, "**Peace be with you!**" At your confirmation, you had this encounter with the Risen Lord and His breathing upon you the **Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit is the "Breath of God"; this powerful wind can penetrate to the core of your heart and transform you! This is your **Pentecost!** Your receipt of the Holy Spirit! Pentecost happens to us every day of our lives, not just once a year. The Holy Spirit is present and active in all seven sacraments. He is the one who is invoked by the priest at the moment of consecration at Mass. Can you feel today the fire of the Love of the Holy Spirit within your own heart? Since your baptism and reinforced at your confirmation, the Holy Spirit dwells within you, whether you feel his presence or not. He is always there within you. You just have to open your heart to that **power of the Holy Spirit. He can do anything for you!** With God, everything is possible! Without God, we are nothing.

At last week's presentation of "**The Fourth Cup**", an amazing conclusion by **Scott Hahn** to our series "The Gift of the Mass", also linking it to the "The Gift of the Holy Spirit", he highlighted the sacredness of the Eucharist, the real presence of the Body of Christ. Even before he converted to Catholicism, Scott Hahn already became a believer in the real presence of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. As a young man, and observing people receiving the Eucharist at a Catholic Mass, he was shocked by the "apparent indifferent attitude of the ones receiving the Eucharist, and lukewarm 'Amen' as a response to 'Body of Christ' with some of them leaving the church right after receiving Jesus!" He wondered what if the priest gave "\$10 million" to every communicant instead of the Eucharist and they accepted the money by shouting a joyful "Amen" (yes, I want to receive \$10 million), putting the dollars in their pockets. People would make very long lines outside the church to come and receive the monetary gift, probably the longest lines we have ever seen (longer than for entering the stadium on Super Bowl Sunday, or longer than those on the eve of Black Friday shopping). Jesus's Body is priceless. Jesus is worth more than \$10 million dollars: He is God!

Happy Pentecost to Everyone! Come Holy Spirit! Fill my heart with your joy! Come Holy Spirit! Help me to share the joy with others around me! Come Holy Spirit! Take over the direction of my life! Come Holy Spirit! Guide each of my steps! Come Holy Spirit! Help me to reflect on the beautiful Gospels proclaimed at every Mass! Come Holy Spirit! Lead every one of my actions!

One in Christ,  
*Father Alain*

