Dear Friends,

A great meditation for today comes from *Word Among Us* and is based on the First Reading for Mass today. I share it with all of you, praying for you today and asking our loving God to be with each of us in peace, joy, and mercy!

**Today's Meditation: Acts 4:13-21**

*Observing the boldness of Peter and John . . . , the leaders, elders, and scribes were amazed. (Acts 4:13)*

What a difference fifty days makes! On Easter Sunday, Jesus' disciples are mourning and refuse to believe eyewitness testimony from Mary Magdalene and the disciples from the road to Emmaus (Mark 16:10-13). When Jesus appears, he rebukes them for their unbelief and hardness of heart (16:14). They're happy to see him, but they still have doubts and suspicions. But just seven weeks later, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, Peter preaches boldly. From that point on, he and all the disciples amaze the Jewish leaders because of their courage and clear preaching (Acts 4:13). So what happened?

Grace happened. During those fifty days, God's grace changed these ordinary men and prepared them for the day when the Holy Spirit would come upon them. Then when the Spirit was poured out, they were filled with courage and felt empowered to proclaim Jesus' resurrection boldly. Of course, Peter and John and the others were not passive bystanders; they had to cooperate with the Spirit by stepping out and opening their mouths. But it was the Spirit who moved them even to do that.

Peter and John’s transformation can seem so dramatic that we might think it’s beyond us. We might think, “I could never talk about God like that. I don’t even know what to say to my son who has stopped going to Mass.” Or “If only I were a little smarter, I could speak up during my Bible study.” But the first Christians were ordinary men and women just like us. They had families and jobs, doubts and fears, sins and failures. And God used them—he gave them his Spirit and changed their lives.

The same Holy Spirit that brought the apostles’ faith to life lives in you. That Spirit can persuade you that the risen Christ has the power to change your life. The Spirit can give you the boldness to pray with a friend who is sick or encouraging words to share with someone struggling with doubt. God delights in using ordinary people—like you.

*“Holy Spirit, give me the courage to share all you have done for me.”*

Have a peace-filled day!

Father Fred