



## CATHOLIC CONVERSATIONS ON THE SCRIPTURES

*Archdiocese of Miami - Ministry of Christian Formation*

May 19, 2013

Pentecost Sunday

### **Gospel reading** John 14:15-16, 23B-26 *[To be read aloud]*

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always. "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Those who do not love me do not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me. "I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you."

### **Brief commentary:**

The earliest Christian communities realized that in Jesus God's many promises had been, and were being fulfilled, in their lives. The promises were many and vastly significant: redemption and justification, forgiveness of sins, salvation and liberation, a new covenant and a new community. These God would personally bring to fruition through the Messiah and through his Spirit that he would pour out in a new way upon humanity. The Old Testament scriptures contain prophetic utterances, poetry, wisdom literature, and stories, which the early Christian communities interpreted in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They found themselves dramatically involved in the new and definitive saving action of God in the world, and this involvement was the result of God's grace working in their lives, fruit of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, as well as from the power of the Holy Spirit deeply affecting and transforming their lives, uniting them as a Christian missionary community. This new reality in the Holy Spirit, this new birth and creation, is what we celebrate today on the feast of Pentecost. As one of the three great pilgrim feasts of the Jews, in which those who were able would visit the Temple in the holy city of Jerusalem, Pentecost (in Hebrew *Shavuot/Weeks*) commemorates the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai and the Covenant that God established by making the descendants of Abraham and Sarah into his own people. In the first reading today we read how the Pentecost following Jesus' passion, resurrection and ascension became the occasion of the giving of the Spirit and the birth of the community of the New Covenant, the Church. Called from all peoples and nations, from all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds, women and men, the Church is called together to form a new family and 'the sign and sacrament of the unity of the human race' in the second Adam, Jesus Christ. It is significant that the community was united in prayer with Mary, the mother of the Lord, who lived her life fully responsive to the work of the Holy Spirit in her life and in the world. The Holy Spirit is at the very heart of this new reality. Fruit of Jesus' passion, death, resurrection and ascension, the Holy Spirit is the divine Agent bringing the vivifying life of God himself in the community and in each of her members. The Spirit is their Advocate, their teacher and guide, who confirms and reconfirms, renews and empowers, the Church in her life and in her mission from age to age. It is the Holy Spirit who will enable Christians to *be* Christians, awakening faith in us, allowing us to hear the voice of the Father, opening our hearts to believe and love Jesus Christ by keeping his commandments and living his Gospel. It is the Holy Spirit who with the spiritual gifts will give to each member of the Church the gifts to contribute to the life and mission of the Church as a whole. It is the Spirit who brings us together as one family, one community, and one people from all over the world, to bear witness to the power of God's love in Jesus Christ and to put to practice the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the sake of the salvation of the world. Indwelt by the Holy Spirit Christians live for the One who gave his life for them, they glorify the Father whose boundless love has adopted us as his sons and daughters in Christ, and they forget themselves so as to serve people, especially those most in need, with the love with which they have been loved and rescued. Pentecost is not simply another date on the Church's calendar, nor simply a founding event of the Church's past, it is a permanent reality that Christians and the Church are called to live every day with profound authenticity and joy. *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.*

### **Today's reading offers significant messages:**

- Just as God had promised to send the Messiah as universal savior, he also promised to pour out his Spirit upon all humankind. The coming of the Holy Spirit is the fruit of the life, passion, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus.
- On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, the "promise of the Father," was poured upon the disciples who, together united to Mary, awaited in Jerusalem to receive the Gift of the Spirit and become Jesus' apostles to the world. The Church throughout history continues to live united to the Mother of the Lord who is both their model and the one who with maternal love never ceases to care for her children, the sisters and brothers of her son.
- The Holy Spirit is the one who makes us Christians and makes us a Church. Everything we are, have and do as Christians is the result of the Spirit's presence, action, illumination and gifts in our lives. The grace of the Spirit empowers us to be disciples of Jesus Christ and intrepid apostles of his Gospel in the world.

### **For our shared or personal reflection:**

*After a brief pause for silent reflection share your answers, ideas or feelings.*

- Do I understand my baptism and confirmation as a permanent reality in my life? How am I producing the fruits of the Spirit as a result of being open to the Spirit's grace?
- Anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit, am I responsive to God's grace in my life? How am I responding to the mission entrusted to me as a Christian and as a member of the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Church?
- How do I live the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit in my life? How do I put these gifts to practice in the service of the Church community and her mission?

**Suggested readings:** Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraphs 683-701, 748-62