



May 20, 2018 Jn. 20: 19-23 & Acts 2: 1-11

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. The [Indestructible Holy Spirit](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Praying for Pentecost](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

[YouTube link](#)

[Forgiven Forgivers](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE:

The day of Pentecost frees the apostles to believe in the power of the Lord. They receive the gift of the Spirit. God had not changed; they had, by the Spirit's gift. The Spirit is always unmerited favor. She always does it first. God is experienced as intimacy and warmth and fire, as love-power. She is surprising, elusive and free. The Spirit blows where the Spirit will, like the wind; it comes from and goes where you know not.

Richard Rohr: Great Themes of Scripture, p. 193, day 206

Jn. 20:19-23

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the **doors** locked for **fear** of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "**Peace be with you!**" 20 After he said this, he

showed them his hands and side. The disciples were **overjoyed** when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "**Peace be with you!** As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he **breathed** on them and said, "Receive the **Holy Spirit**. 23 If you **forgive** anyone his sins, they are **forgiven**; if you do not **forgive** them, they are not **forgiven**."

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The Spirit has given each of us unique ways to share our faith. What is my gift? How do I share it?

PRAYER:

Pentecost

In quietness and trust, / I yield myself this moment / To the Presence that gives me life, / To the Reality that existed before the earth was made, / To the Spirit that came and comes as fire / To turn around our lives / And make them new.

Burn within me, God! Let me feel your fire! Burn warm with love! Burn bright with joy! Burn hot to consume / all that makes me doubt your power in me, / your love through me. Burn away my barriers to completeness. Burn away my limited consciousness, / inbred by habits of thought, / by opinions of others, /

by seeming necessities that have become my master Burn away my slavery to fear / And teach me, within, the looseness of listening, / the rhythm of trust.

[Grace Adolphsen Brame](#) Grana, Janice. [Images](#). St. Mary's College Press. Winona MN. 1976. Page29.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

FEAR: It appears that there are two basic sources of energy in the world. They are love and fear. When we are acting out of love, we can stand and even welcome light. When we are acting out of fear, we seem to prefer darkness.

If you had been one of the disciples that day, what feelings might you have had when Jesus appeared? Might it have been fear? Love? A combination of the two?

DOORS: Doors can protect by keeping out what we do not want to let in, or lock us in and not let us out.

Do you think there was anxiety in the room when Jesus came in their midst, even though, or especially because the doors were locked?

PEACE BE WITH YOU: Peace is that condition of wholeness, contentment, and fulfillment. It is when everything is just as God intends it to be.

Jesus wanted his presence to be a source of peace. How is Jesus' presence a source of peace for you?

SHOWED: To have something shown to us is to let us in on its reality.

How is Jesus letting us in on his new reality this day?

OVERJOYED: To be overjoyed is to be so full of joy that you are running over with emotion. Tears of joy often accompany it. *When was the last time you were crying tears of joy because your feelings were running over your limits? Can you imagine the disciples and Mary's feelings that first Easter morning?*

BREATHED: In Genesis, God breathes on the new creation, and humanity comes into being. John's gospel wants us to connect this event with a new creation. *How has the Easter recreated you this year? Have you been able to go deeper into the awesome reality of God's love for you?*

HOLY SPIRIT: In the Hebrew Scriptures there was a concept of the holiness of God's spirit, but until Pentecost, the people would not have experienced it personally. John's gospel has the Resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the same day. *How has the Holy Spirit helped you to realize God's love for you this year? If you were to try to talk about it with a friend, what images would you use?*

FORGIVE / FORGIVEN: God's love enables us to recognize a need, and then ask for the gift. To forgive is to give before asked, therefore each of us is fore given before we are even able to ask. *Have you ever pondered about where the insight and motivation come from when you recognize a fault and then are able to ask for forgiveness? Does it seem to come from beyond you?*

PARALLEL TEXTS: Jn. 20:19 // Jn. 14:27; Jn. 20: 21 // Jn. 17:18; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47f; Acts 2:1 // Ex. 23:14; Acts 2:2 // Jn. 3:8; Acts 2: 4 // Acts 1:5; 5:4; 31:11; 16:19; Ps. 104:30; Jn. 20:33; Acts 2:5 //Wis. 1:7; Acts 2:11 // Acts 10:46; Acts 2:13 // 1 Cor. 14:23; Acts 2:17 // Is. 2:2; 44:3; Joel 3:1-5; Acts 2:21 // Rom. 10:13;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Acts 2:1-11; [Ps. 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34](#); 1 Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn. 20:19-23
Revised Common Lectionary: Acts 2:1-21; [Ps. 104:24-35](#); Rom. 8:14-17; Jn. 14:8-17, 25-27;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Those who know the gift of forgiveness in their own lives can be the presence of this love and compassion for others who still are not alive to the secret in their own hearts. Forgiveness is the gift to transgress all boundaries of propriety and welcome others into the circle of life which the presence of God has reintroduced in his gift of reconciliation. Fr. David Bock

In his book *Breathing Under Water*, Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr says that forgiveness implies letting go "of our hope for a better or different past." Both the forgiver and the forgiven acknowledge the reality of what has happened between them, but they will not let themselves be bound by it. They know the hurt but refuse to replay it again and again, pressing the bruise so it will never fade away.

Today's Pentecostal image of a conversation among many languages, many culture, anticipates the world in which we live. And we are part of that conversation, in way we never would have imagined. Today we celebrate the birthday of this Church.
Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pg. 83... To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Way back in 1994 Fr. Rolheiser wrote [Blocking Pentecost](#). It is a good read and I quote here a portion that might induce you to read the one page article. "Because none of us has really grieved what we lost. The Catholicism that so many of us grew up on was, in truth, one of the more powerful expressions of Christianity ever incarnated. It died – and nobody grieved it! Conservatives are not really grieving. They're angry and in denial. They haven't accepted that something has died. They're still trying to resuscitate it. Liberals aren't grieving either. They don't admit that the pre-Vatican II church is worth grieving! They're happy that this particular incarnation of Catholicism has died since, for them, it was not a very healthy expression of church in any case. In both cases, there is no ascension, no reverent letting go of the old in such a way that it can bless the present. The conservatives block that blessing through denial, the liberals through self-hatred."

All language about God is necessarily symbolic and figurative. Actually all language is metaphorical. Words are never the thing itself; they can only point toward the thing, which is exactly why "The Word became flesh" (John 1:14). As James Finley, a CAC core faculty member, often says, "Language is in service of the unsayable." When it comes to comprehending God and the great mysteries of love and death, knowing has to be balanced by unknowing. Words can only point a finger toward the moon; they are not the moon or even its light. They are that by which we begin to see the moon and its light. Richard Rohr

Pentecost reminds us that we can hear each other speaking of the really real "in our own languages." Pg.23.
Ashbrook & Albright. Zygon 3/1999

But the Church is the movement of the Spirit, and not the property or possession of those of us who are moved by it.
Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2005. Pg.95.

The day of Pentecost frees the apostles to believe in a God who is actively involved in their lives and no longer a mere intellectual concept. The Holy Spirit has become wind, fire, joy, excitement, universal shareability, and not just another boring Sabbath obligation or more commandments to obey. Notice how all the metaphors of Spirit presence are dynamic, alive, moving, and universally available. The Spirit will always be totally unmerited grace. She always takes the initiative, because Spirit is omnipresent, and thus there first! In the first Pentecost account ([Acts 2:1-13](#)) the Holy Spirit is experienced as intimacy, enlightenment, joy, and fire, and as the power to love beyond boundaries and ethnicities, which now becomes the universal language. She is presented as surprising, elusive, and free, and yet totally given. The Spirit comes from no place we can control, least of all by our good behavior or even our bad behavior. All we can do is surrender, enjoy, and share. A spirit-filled life becomes like a pass-through savings account—which gains lots of “interest” for yourself and others when it is consciously enjoyed. Richard Rohr

Pentecost was an important Jewish festival celebrating the harvest of first fruits. We revisit this portion of John’s gospel for Pentecost which became one of the earliest festivals kept by Christians who now have given it new meanings. It was the last call for baptisms for those who missed the Easter Vigil. It once spanned the liturgical calendar until Advent but now we call the interval ‘ordinary time’. The Council of Nicaea (325 A. D.) banned fasting or kneeling during this period. In the Middle Ages a variety of creative customs developed around Pentecost Day. Rose petals were dropped from the rafters to simulate tongues of fire and trumpets were sounded to recall the mighty wind. In other places a live dove was released, later replaced by a carved dove, let down by ropes. What ways do you celebrate this foundational feast

Thanks to the Risen Lord, we live without fearing death and die without losing life. Pg. 243

Olivera, Bernardo, O.C.S. O. [The Search for God: Conference, letters, and homilies.](#) Kalamazoo, MI. Cistercian Pub. 2002.

How can we forgive those who do not want to be forgiven? Our deepest desire is that the forgiveness we offer will be received. This mutuality between giving and receiving is what creates peace and harmony. But if our condition for giving forgiveness is that it will be received, we seldom will forgive! Forgiving the other is first and foremost an inner movement. It is an act that removes anger, bitterness, and the desire for revenge from our hearts and helps us to reclaim our human dignity. We cannot force those we want to forgive into accepting our forgiveness. They might not be able or willing to do so. They may not even know or feel that they have wounded us. Henri Nouwen

To forgive another person from the heart is an act of liberation. We set that person free from the negative bonds that exist between us. We say, "I no longer hold your offense against you" But there is more. We also free ourselves from the burden of being the "offended one." As long as we do not forgive those who have wounded us, we carry them with us or, worse, pull them as a heavy load. The great temptation is to cling in anger to our enemies and then define ourselves as being offended and wounded by them. Forgiveness, therefore, liberates not only the other but also ourselves. It is the way to the freedom of the children of God. Henri Nouwen

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. When we forgive a person, the memory of the wound might stay with us for a long time, even throughout our lives. Sometimes we carry the memory in our bodies as a visible sign. But forgiveness changes the way we remember. It converts the curse into a blessing. When we forgive our parents for their divorce, our children for their lack of attention, our friends for their unfaithfulness in crisis, our doctors for their ill advice, we no longer have to experience ourselves as the victims of events we had no control over. Forgiveness allows us to claim our own power and not let these events destroy us; it enables them to become events that deepen the wisdom of our hearts. Forgiveness indeed heals memories. Henri Nouwen

Pentecost is also a [Jewish feast](#). The second in importance of the great [Jewish](#) feasts. The term, adopted from the Greek-speaking [Jews](#) (Tob. 2:1; II Mac. 12:32; [Josephus](#), "Ant.", III, x, 6; etc.) alludes to the fact that the [feast](#), known in the [Old Testament](#) as "the [feast](#) of harvest of the [firstfruits](#)" ([Exodus 23:16](#)), "the [feast](#) of weeks" ([Exodus 34:22](#); [Deuteronomy 16:10](#); [2 Chronicles 8:13](#)), the "day of [firstfruits](#)" ([Numbers 28:26](#)), and called by later [Jews](#) '[asereth](#) or '[asartha](#) (solemn assembly, and probably "closing festival", Pentecost being the closing festival of the harvest and of the Paschal season), fell on the fiftieth day from "the next day after the [sabbath](#)" of the [Passover](#) ([Leviticus 23:11](#)).

Ten days after Jesus’ ascension, the Spirit of God came upon the disciples at Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-4), and with that, the church was born, a birth made possible, oddly enough, by the absence of Jesus (Jn. 16:7). The church becomes the body of Christ, the presence of God here and now, only in the absence of the body of Jesus, who rose and then ascended to be with God. For Christians, the incarnation is like a rainbow; it makes God unmistakable present, and yet also inherently elusive and utterly transcendent. Susan A. Ross. Page 267. Ochs, Peter, et al Ed. [Christianity in Jewish Terms](#). Boulder CO. Westview Press. 2000.

Never does the human soul appear so strong as when it forgoes revenge, and dares forgive an injury. Edwin Hubbel Chapin

We overcome the evil in the world by the charity and compassion of God, and in so doing we drive all evil out of our own hearts. Thomas Merton: No Man Is An Island: 163.

We understand that God does not love us because we are lovable, but that we are lovable precisely because God loves us. God's love is what gives us our worth. Michael Battle

Every divine encounter in the Bible, including the life of Christ, consists of an iconoclasm of familiar ways of thinking and being. The crucified Christ should serve as a point at which we withdraw our projections from Christ (and God) to receive the individual flame of the Holy Spirit of Pentecost, and to find our own personal destiny in God. This is an imitation of Christ. Dr. David Hirstius

Without Pentecost the Christ-event - the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - remains imprisoned in history as something to remember, think about and reflect on. The Spirit of Jesus comes to dwell within us, so that we can become living Christ's here and now. Henri Nouwen'

Pentecost lifts the whole mystery of salvation out of its particularities and makes it into something universal, embracing all peoples, all countries, all seasons and all eras. Pentecost is also the moment of empowering. Henri Nouwen

We are waiting for the Spirit to come. Are we really? For most of us Pentecost is a non-event but Pentecost is the coming of the Spirit of Jesus into the world. It is the celebration of God breaking through the boundaries of time and space and opening the whole world for the re-creating power of love. Henri Nouwen

Pentecost (the Greek word for fiftieth), was originally an agricultural celebration. The farmers planted their crops around the feast of Passover (now our Easter), and the first fruits came in about seven weeks and a day later, i.e., the fiftieth day. So there was a major feast day, in which the first fruits of the crops were offered to YHWH in the temple

The evolution of evolution two thousand years ago was also an evolution of the immanence of God as Holy Spirit. It came to be understood that the Spirit created new opportunities for mutually supportive relationships not only among a small group of original followers of Jesus but among all people's This is one way to understand Pentecost, when under the influence of the Spirit people speaking different languages could understand one another. Thus the possibility arose for entering into more extensive caring relationships with one another. Peters, Karl E. Toward an Evolutionary Christian Theology. Zygon, Spring 2007. Pg. 59.

When God decided to create the world, God foresaw all the sin that human beings would commit. The only way God could continue was to decide to forgive the world before creating it. Strange as it may seem, the commitment to forgive comes before the creation. Old Jewish story.

"It must be admitted therefore that if the gospel of peace is no longer convincing on the lips of Christians, it may well be because they have ceased to give a living example of peace, unity and love. True, we have to understand that the Church was never intended to be absolutely perfect on earth, and she is a Church of sinners, laden with imperfection. Christian peace and Christian charity are based indeed on this need to 'bear one another's burdens,' to accept the infirmities that plague one's own life and the lives of others. Our unity is a struggle with disunity and our peace exists in the midst of conflict."
Merton, Thomas. *Peace in the Post-Christian Era*, (Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 2004), P 129

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other. Mother Teresa

Forgiving is not forgetting; it's actually remembering — remembering and not using your right to hit back. It's a second chance for a new beginning. And the remembering part is particularly important. Especially if you don't want to repeat what happened.
- Desmond Tutu

Forgiveness brings freedom - freedom from being controlled by the past, freedom from the emotional ties to the offender, freedom from the continual inner conflicts of bitterness and hate, freedom to become whole and enjoy the fullness of life. - Jeanette Vought

Those who know the gift of forgiveness in their own lives can be the presence of this love and compassion for others who still are not alive to the secret in their own hearts. Forgiveness is the gift to transgress all boundaries of propriety and welcome others into the circle of life which the presence of God has reintroduced in his gift of reconciliation. Fr. David Bock

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2015. Pgs 81-83. To order contact Carol.Oberfoell@loras.edu

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2014. Pgs. 125-129.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle C 2013. Pgs. 104-107.

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2005. pgs. 90-95.