

RCIA: SESSION THIRTY
The Holy Spirit
Week: 15/05/23 – 21/05/23

In the Old Testament:

- The Old Testament does not speak of the “Holy Spirit” but of the “Spirit of God”. This “Spirit of God” is different from the spirit of the world. The Spirit of God is considered to be the source of life and is imparted to certain key individuals – particularly to the prophets.
- The Spirit of God describes the coming Messiah, is seen as a gift and a blessing and will be imparted to all of the faithful within the believing community.

In the New Testament:

- The “Holy Spirit” is very active. Jesus, the Son of God, was conceived through the Spirit; the Spirit descended on him at his baptism; Jesus was driven into the desert by the Spirit for his encounter with Satan. The Spirit is seen as the moving power behind the activities of Jesus.
- The significant gift of the Spirit was given on the first Pentecost. Peter saw this outpouring as the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament. This outpouring of the Spirit is the beginning of a process that will continue through all time.
- The Spirit chooses Paul and is the power behind his missionary activity throughout Asia and Europe. The Spirit foretells to Paul the sufferings of his imprisonment. It is in the writings of St Paul that the most impressive and comprehensive testimony to the Spirit is given.

The Gift (Gifts) of the Spirit:

- The most striking gift of the Spirit is glossolalia, the gift of tongues, an unintelligible stammering in praise of God.
- For Paul, one of the more important gifts is that of ‘prophecy’ i.e., the explanation of the word of God.
- During the life of the believer the Spirit grants all of the gifts of salvation for which the believer longs.
- The deepest purpose of the Spirit is to be a Spirit of joy, of love, of service.
- Currently the seven gifts of the Spirit are named as: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, Wonder and Awe in God’s presence. These should not be viewed as

individual gifts only. Their ecclesial origin and orientation should not be lost sight of.

- The fruits of the Holy Spirit are: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Trustfulness, Gentleness, Self-control.
- The symbols of the Holy Spirit are: Water, Anointing, Fire, Breath, Cloud, Light, The seal, The hand, The finger, The dove.

Gospel Reflection Sunday 21st May is the Ascension of the Lord, Year A and the Gospel is Mt. 28:16-20.

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Do I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

GOSPEL READING

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said,
*'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations;
baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.*

'And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer Service – Witnesses to the Spirit:

Sign of the Cross

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit! Move us to bring your love to the world.

All/Response: **Come, Holy Spirit! Move us to bring your love to the world.**

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with the desire to be followers of Jesus, so we can witness to your love in our lives, by the love we have for each other.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with courage as followers of Jesus, so we will not be afraid to show, by the way we live, that we believe in you.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with the boldness to be followers of Jesus, so we can go where you want us to, to spread your love.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with action as followers of Jesus, so that we will fight injustice, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and see all of your people as our sisters and brothers.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with energy as followers of Jesus, so that we will be moved to work for change in the world.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, fill us with compassion, so that our hearts will be moved to care for those who are suffering.

(All/Response).

Leader: Holy Spirit, help us to show, by the lives we live, that we are true witnesses to your love.

(All/Response).

Leader: Together let us pray:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Enkindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created,

And you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Sign of the Cross.