

The Word of God This Week

Set time aside each day this week with other members of your household, with other members of your parish or alone to listen to and reflect on the living Word of God. Use these passages from the Lectionary that are assigned for Liturgy this week. Reflect on how the Lord is inviting you to a deeper union with him.

TODAY*

Acts 2:1–11

1 Corinthians 12:3b–7, 12–13

John 21:20–25

MONDAY

Matthew 5:38–42

"Do not resist an evildoer."

TUESDAY

Matthew 5:43–48

"... pray for those who persecute you ..."

WEDNESDAY

Matthew 6:1–6

"Beware of practicing your piety before others ..."

THURSDAY

Matthew 6:7–15

"... forgive others their trespasses ..."

FRIDAY

Matthew 6:19–23

"... store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ..."

SATURDAY

Matthew 6:24–34

"... do not worry about your life ..."

*Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday

Inspired to Be One in the Spirit of Jesus

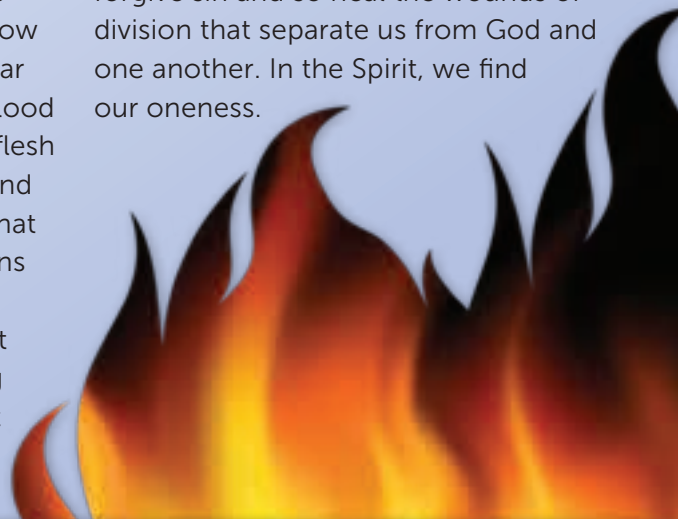
Sin is aptly described as separation from God. The most significant moral evil that we ever encounter in life is division, our division or separation from God and from each other. The original sin of our first parents set the pattern. They alienated themselves from God, and it rebounded into their relationship with one another.

The redemptive work of Jesus Christ moves in the opposite direction. Paul's letter to the Ephesians expresses this unifying work of Jesus Christ: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:13–14).

Today's readings for the great feast of Pentecost tell us how the unifying and reconciling work of Jesus Christ is carried out among us. It is in the power of the Holy Spirit that

we become one in God. We are truly inspired or "in-spirited" to unity.

The divisions of language are overcome by the Spirit who enables us to speak a common language of faith. That is the message of the reading from Acts. Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians speaks to the way the Spirit brings unity out of diversity in the Body of Christ, his Church. And finally, Jesus, in the Gospel, sends his Holy Spirit to enable us to forgive sin and so heal the wounds of division that separate us from God and one another. In the Spirit, we find our oneness.



The Faith of the Church

The very identity of the Church, the Body of Christ, is tied to a mission of unity in the world. At the beginning of Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church*, the Council tells us that the Church is like a sacrament of all humanity's unity in God. This can only be the work of the Holy Spirit (Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 1).



Questions of the Week

People around the world seem to be so divided from each other. Often the source of division is not even clear. What is clear is that it is not God's will that we be alienated from one another.

Adults

When I take an honest look at my life, how do I determine the major fault lines of division that keep me separated from other people and from God?

Children

How do I know that everyone belongs to one family, God's family?

Responding to God's Word . . .

"Spiritual people" are often considered to be other worldly. They seem to live in a different realm of concerns. In faith, we know that is not the case. Spiritual people are people led by God's Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit of God is active in this world in works of reconciliation, transformation, and unification. The Spirit draws us into the very oneness of God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

A truly spiritual person, then, manifests those same works of the Holy Spirit in the course of daily life. A spiritual person is solidly committed to bridging the divides that keep people

away from each other for whatever reasons. The Spirit enables forgiveness and clarity of knowledge of others, which fosters connection and unity.

To live spiritually means to live responsibly. We take up the gifts and the mission of the Holy Spirit and seek to foster reconciliation and unity among all people. It begins in family life and extends out into our communities, our nation, and the entire world. If we have been gifted with God's Holy Spirit, then we are responsible to carry on the work of the Spirit in the particular circumstances of our lives.



Meditation Moment

The Cross and the Switchblade describes Rev. David Wilkerson's work with young derelicts in New York City. One firsthand report in the book comes from a heroin user named Joe. He says: "The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, they told me. When I thought of comfort, I thought of a bottle of wine and a dozen goof balls. But these guys were talking about comfort from heaven where I could feel clean later. I got to wanting this. . . . I cried to God for help and that's when he [the Holy Spirit] came. . . . I didn't want any more drugs. I loved everybody. For the first time in my life I felt clean."

For reflection . . .

What role does the Holy Spirit play in my life? Do I pray to the Holy Spirit?

O COME, O HOLY SPIRIT, COME!
COME AS HOLY LIGHT AND LEAD US.
COME AS HOLY TRUTH AND TEACH US.
ANCIENT PRAYER (ADAPTED)

FROM *VISION* BY MARK LINK, SJ

A Litany of the Holy Spirit for Unity

When we are divided in our family, Holy Spirit, make us one. When wars divide us, Holy Spirit, make us one. When injustice and exploitation build barriers, Holy Spirit, make us one. When divisions beset your Church, Holy Spirit, make us one. When sin separates us from the Body of Christ, Holy Spirit, make us one. When we come to the final stage of our life's journey, Holy Spirit, make us one. Amen.

Carry this thought in your heart as a guide for your faith journey this week.

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." When Saint Francis prayed this prayer, he asked to be an instrument of the Holy Spirit whose action and gift is peace and unity.

SUGGESTIONS

Use one of these suggestions or one of your own to respond to God's Word this week.

In the home. Begin a conversation in the family. Ask an important question: what is it that really brings the family together as one?

In the workplace or in school. Identify a situation or a relationship that seems to be divided. Take one step to foster reconciliation and unity.

In the community. Inform yourself of resources in your community that seek to build bridges among different people.

Profile in Faith

Saint Josaphat

Saint Josaphat (?–1623) was a bishop and martyr of the eastern Church. He strove with every possible effort to work for the unity of the Church, especially the eastern Churches with Rome. He was a man sustained by the Spirit. His efforts for unity earned him hostility and, eventually, martyrdom for the cause.

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Rev. Msgr. Robert M. Coerver, Censor Librorum

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† Most Reverend Kevin J. Farrell, DD, Bishop of Dallas
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