

The Gift of Peace

1st Reading: Acts 2:1-11

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13

Gospel: Jn 20:19-23

“Peace be with you.” On hearing those four simple words, the fear that had paralyzed the disciples gives way to rejoicing. We, too, can feel paralyzed at times – by fear, yes – but also indecision, conflict, negativity, and perhaps even headlines that remind us how fractured our world has become. Yet here is Jesus, wishing us peace and giving us the gift of Pentecost: our Advocate, the Holy Spirit. As Jesus breathes on the disciples, he confers upon them a Spirit of peace that will allow them to push past their fears and build up the Church. “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” We, too, can turn to the Holy Spirit in times of trouble to help us move forward in faith, sharing peace and reconciliation with those we encounter.

Sometimes after a tiring or stressful day, we head home and, in a bid to find comfort we tend to scan social media or whatever other distractions might pop up on our smartphone. A friend read somewhere that doing so amounts to effectively putting your time in the shredder! Today’s readings challenge me and all of us to dig deeper. Why not, instead, find a quiet place to pray, asking the Holy Spirit for a refresh as we move into the next part of our day, which is indeed the first minute of the rest of our lives. There’s nothing wrong with downtime! But in the Holy Spirit, we can find a source of inspiration, energy, and creativity. As St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.” Just as Jesus sent out the disciples, he sends us out to share our gifts to build up the Church.

PRAY: We thank you, God, for the ways your Holy Spirit helps us see your love through the people and world around us. We thank you for the gifts of the Spirit within us and for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit, open our hearts as we listen to your word. We ask this in Christ’s name.