

Solemnity of Pentecost



Send Forth Your Spirit

Almighty God,
with scripture, prayer, song, and red
banners,
we celebrate your Holy Spirit,
who is as surely in our midst today
as in that room on the first Pentecost.
We thank you for the Spirit's work
of mending, inspiring, challenging, and
giving life.

We ask you to send your Spirit
into those parts of our lives and our worlds
that are especially troubled
or in need of your healing:

[Pause here to name special needs]

We ask this through our Lord, Jesus
Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns
with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Sunday, June 12, 2011 Understanding Beyond Words

Today's Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23. How striking in the First Reading from Acts is the description of people speaking different languages, yet still being understood! Even those who speak the same language often can't communicate. Pentecost reverses the Tower of Babel story, which tries to explain why people began speaking in different languages. On the Pentecost described in Acts, people discovered understanding, despite their linguistic differences.

Pentecost continues today, as African students in a classroom learn English, and across the hall, North Americans learn Spanish. A young California woman who had emergency gall bladder surgery in a Tokyo hospital felt alone and afraid, unable to communicate or understand her nurses

and doctors. But another patient broke down the language barrier. She simply lifted her hospital gown and showed the American her scar, a silent signal that she could relate to the young woman's pain. The Spirit always seeks a way to break through.

One way to celebrate Pentecost is to appreciate the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. The processes of ordinary living are so fragile, so immensely significant, so fraught with terror, that we desperately need someone beyond ourselves. We need the warmth and power of the Spirit to help us in whatever we have undertaken. If you look back over the last 5, 10, or 20 years, where could you say this? "Ah yes. So you, life-giving Spirit and Guide, were there all along."



This Week at Home and Beyond

Ordinary Time

While the Easter season has officially ended, there are plenty of memorials, feasts, and solemnities during Ordinary Time. Here are a few to anticipate.

Sunday, June 19

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Some early Christian theologians believed that the inner life of the Trinity is like a dance (called *perichoresis* in Greek) among the three persons of God. Their perfect dance fills the universe and we are invited to join in. Today's Readings: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18.

Wednesday, June 22

Optional Memorial of Saint Thomas More

Saint Thomas More (1478-1535) gives us the wonderful reassurance that it's possible to be a saint *and* keep a fine sense of humor. Saint Teresa of Avila, who once asked God to deliver her from dour saints, would have loved Thomas. He was Chancellor of England, and he taught his daughters Greek and Latin in the sixteenth century, when girls weren't educated. He was also a brilliant legal scholar and refused to take an oath proclaiming King Henry VIII head of the Church of England. Although this led to his death, More prayed that he and his enemies would meet merrily in heaven. He joked with his executioner about sparing his beard, since it had done the king no harm. You might rent the film *A Man for All Seasons* to learn more about him. Today's Readings: Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Matthew 7:15-20.

Sunday, June 26

Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ

For Roman Catholics, the sacrament of the Eucharist stands at the center of spiritual life. In this sacrifice and meal, Christ shares his life with us through his body and blood

in the form of bread and wine. Little by little we are nourished and changed each time we receive the sacrament. Today many parishes will celebrate Christ's body and blood with a procession, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance, under a portable canopy, for everyone to see and adore. Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14b-16a; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; John 6:51-58.

Friday, July 29

Memorial of Saint Martha

She's the patron saint of chefs, probably because she cooked for Jesus. Martha was outspoken and gritty: she complained that her sister didn't help her enough, and she reminded Jesus that after three days, the corpse of her brother Lazarus would stink. But she also served, loved, and believed in him. Today's Readings: Leviticus 23:1, 4-11; 15-16, 27, 34b-37; John 11:19-27.

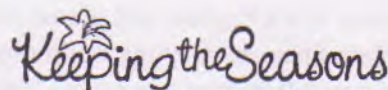
Tuesday, November 1

Solemnity of All Saints

An amazing gallery of human personalities, all tested, deep, and true disciples, the Communion of Saints stands as a great chorus of mentors, friends, taskmasters, and sympathetic confidants for those of us on earth. Get a sense of the marvelous varieties of holiness in the enormous nave tapestries at the Los Angeles Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The tapestries are hung so that the figures appear to be processing on either side of the nave toward the altar. You can view pictures of the tapestries on the Cathedral Web site: <http://www.olacathedral.org/>. Click on "Art," and then "View North Tapestries Gallery" or "View South Tapestries Gallery." Most are labeled, but some are not, representing those saints known only to God. Today's Readings: Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14; 1 John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12a.



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 Keeping the Seasons

Reproducibles for Lent-Triduum-Easter 2011