



A NEW CHURCH VISION
Pentecost Sunday
May 23, 2021

FIRST READING: Acts 2:1-11 **SECOND READING:** 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 **GOSPEL:** Jn 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

REFLECTIONS

READINGS: Luke has the Holy Spirit come on Pentecost to announce the beginning of a new Church, universal in scope. People of every nation will be invited to join this new People of God. The first gift the Spirit imparts is the gift of tongues – and understanding. Perhaps the most miraculous thing about this whole event is the inner change it works in the disciples. A group of fear-filled disciples now become bold proclaimers of the Gospel.

St. Paul contrasts life in the spirit to life in the flesh. Life in the flesh follows earthly passions. Paul names fifteen such passions. When living life in the Spirit, one bears good fruit. Paul lists nine virtues or fruits of the Spirit.

GOSPEL: "On the evening of that first day of the week...Jesus came." This appearance happens on Easter Sunday evening, the evening of the Resurrection. The fact that Jesus can come through locked doors shows that the "resurrected life" is totally different. Jesus imparts three gifts: peace, joy and the Spirit. Then Jesus imparts his Spirit: "He breathed on them." This gesture is reminiscent of God breathing life into Adam. Pentecost is the beginning of a new creation. By his gesture of breathing, Jesus brings to birth his Church. He then commissions those gathered to go forth and forgive sins.

DISCUSSION

1. Who is the Holy Spirit to you? If you have a relationship with the Holy Spirit, how did it begin and develop?

2. In the second reading, Paul names 9 fruits of the Spirit, which fruit comes easy for you? Which fruit is a challenge? *Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*. What gift of the Spirit do you most desire or need at this time in your life? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit's presence and activity in your life?

3. This is the birthday of the Church. A new creation, for all things are now new in Christ, who sends the Holy Spirit, an Advocate, to guide and strengthen the apostles in their "new" mission. We have spent the Easter season reflecting on our parish mission. To Share Christ with the World. With that understanding, a vision of what our parish can look like has emerged.

"A DYNAMIC and JOYFUL church where people experience GOD'S SAVING LOVE."

That's the vision we are casting for Saint Mary Magdalen Catholic Parish.

- Like our mission, *every word* is vital on its own. What does it mean to you and how can we contribute to making the vision come to be:
to be *dynamic*? to be *joyful*? to be *church*? to be for *all people*?
to be about *experiences*? and to be a source of God's *Saving Love*?

PENTECOST WEEK CLOSING PRAYER

LEADER: This week consider praying briefly over each member of your group for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit - ask each person what gift or fruit (peace, joy, love, etc.) of the Holy Spirit they would like to receive or grow in.

Jesus, you have given me the Holy Spirit to aid me in doing your work. Please help me to bring your [peace, joy, love, patience, etc] to _____.

Or – take turns and pray for every gift, for all....

Jesus, you have given us the Holy Spirit to aid in doing your work. Please help us to bring your peace/joy, love, self-control, etc. to _____.

NEXT WEEK: Connecting, Mission + Vision + Values

