

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2009



PENTECOST SUNDAY

"THE FEAST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT"

Once upon a time... long, long ago... there was a man named Jesus. As an adult, Jesus was a teacher, preacher and healer. He reached out to the poor, hungry, and hurting. He associated with sinners, people of other races, and women. He welcomed children. Jesus' primary focus was to spread good news. He wanted to set people free. He wanted to call people to new life.

Jesus attracted many followers. He had a group of Apostles and women who not only were special in his life, they became attached and devoted to him. For 3 years, Jesus went around doing good for others... while at the same time arousing envy, jealousy and hatred among some of the religious and political leaders of his day.

Eventually, Jesus was betrayed. He was handed over to the authorities who had him scourged, and later crucified on a cross.

Having died, Jesus' followers were sent reeling into paralyzing fear... fear of living... fear of others who might accuse them of having been followers of Jesus... fear of meeting the same fate as their beloved friend.

Jesus' followers were also grieving the loss of the one who brought joy, love and meaning to their lives. They were depressed and forlorn. They were suddenly feeling abandoned... without hope... aimless... with no sense of direction to their lives.

Over a period of time... the disciples came to experience and know... that their beloved friend, Jesus, was alive, not dead. This realization took them completely by surprise. They wondered if they were crazy, hallucinating, and losing their minds. Nothing had prepared them for what they were coming to know: Jesus is alive! He is with us... He is among us... As we heard in the Gospel, Jesus was continuously greeting them with peace.



Peter Paul Reubens, [Descent of the Holy Sprit](#) (1619),
Neuburg Palace, Neuburg State Gallery, Germany

One day Jesus' followers were completely bowled over and transformed. They were filled with a new Spirit... the Holy Spirit. They were people with a new heart and a new mind. As our 1st Reading stated: "They were filled with the Holy Spirit." From then on they had courage to carry on the work of Jesus. They were bold in proclaiming Jesus alive. They were fearless in facing an unknown future because they knew they were not alone. The Spirit of Jesus was with them.

My sisters and brothers, we, too, are gifted today... and every day... with the Spirit of Pentecost. This week, ask Jesus to send His Spirit into the places of our lives where we are hurting, confused and aimless. Pray to the Spirit of Pentecost to transform our fear into faith; our despair and doubt into hope; our greed into generosity. Beg the Holy Spirit to fill us with joy, peace and patience.

And finally, share with God our deepest desires... that, we, like the followers of Jesus, will be transformed into people aglow with the Holy Spirit.