

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

Pentecost Sunday | For Sunday, May 31, 2020

## Being Sent Forth Into A New World

*Written by Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

**Acts 2:1-11**

**1 Corinthians 12:3B-7, 12-13**

**John 20:19-23**



That first Pentecost Sunday found the apostles in the upper room gathered in prayer.

In many ways, we find ourselves in a similar situation as the apostles did on that first Pentecost Sunday.

Many of us are still under stay-at-home orders or are working under restrictions to wear masks and keep our distance from each other. We have not been able to attend Mass since the first weeks of Lent.

In the meantime, our homes have become places of more intense prayer. Not able to gather with our parish community, we watch the Mass on television or broadcast through social media. All the while, our longing to receive Jesus in the Eucharist is growing. We long for the day when we will receive Holy Communion alongside our brothers and sisters in faith.

Just so, the apostles experienced a longing for the Lord. Only ten days earlier, Jesus had ascended into heaven. He was taken from their sight and their only consolation was his promise, "You will receive power from on high." With longing for their Lord, they prayed fervently until the promise was fulfilled on that first Pentecost Sunday.

Saint Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles that, on that day, when the apostles preached the good news of Jesus' resurrection, three thousand were baptized and added to the faith.

Under normal circumstances, those who are preparing to enter the Catholic Church are baptized during the Easter Vigil. However, under the circumstances of this pandemic, many parishes planned to baptize and confirm new Catholics on Pentecost Sunday. We pray that restrictions have been lifted enough that they can finally receive what their hearts have longed for during this long season of preparation — to be united with Jesus in His Church through the sacraments of initiation.

Baptism on Easter is fitting because, through baptism, Jesus' victory over sin and death is applied to us. But it is also fitting to baptize on Pentecost, because baptism makes us members of Jesus' mystical body, the Church, and empowers us to participate in the mission of making Christ known throughout the world. Perhaps the grace of this Pentecost Sunday is that we can discover our calling to spread the gospel wherever we find ourselves.

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus gave his apostles the great commission to go out to all the world. On this Pentecost Sunday, "going out into the world" will look a lot different than it has in the past. We will have to use technology and social media even more than we have to this point. Hopefully, our increased involvement will make Facebook, Twitter, and the other social media platforms more civil and less divisive. What a witness it would be if people sat up and noticed that our content on social media was more loving and positive. What a great thing it would be if they could say, "See how they love one another," after reading our posts.

We have good news for a world that is growing weary of division, hatred, and negativity. It is the saving message of a God who is with us, who brings good out of all situations, and who loves us unconditionally. It is the good news of a God whose Spirit empowers us to bring light to the dark places of this world and hope to those who despair. He leads us out of confinement, out of fear, to embrace new possibilities.

## PRAYER

Holy Spirit

Come like a mighty rushing wind  
And awaken us out of our complacency  
Our apathy, our indifference.

Disturb us

For we are too content

To let things go on as they are,  
And to let people go on not knowing you.

Penetrate the closed gates of our hearts  
And make us live again.

O Holy Spirit, create among us

A mighty Christian revolution

And cast the fear of the unknown

Out of our lives.

Amen.

*(Michael Hollings & Etta Gullick)*

*Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*