23 May 2021

SUNDAY PLUS

Faithful companions

Gift poured into our hearts



Sr Mary Burke is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

by Sr Mary Burke FMDM

Today we celebrate the apostles gathered in the Upper Room with Mary the mother of Jesus to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit: the very Spirit of Jesus. Jesus offers each one of us this same gift today and every day. Receiving this gift invites us into the relationship of love that exists between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus makes the comforting promise of his Spirit to his disciples as he turns his face towards Jerusalem and the Cross.

As Jesus dies on the cross, John recalls, he "gave up his spirit". This giving up of Jesus' Spirit is the foretaste of Pentecost. The Spirit no longer indwells the physical body of Jesus only, but Jesus gives his Spirit to the Church, his Mystical Body and we are Christ's Church. We receive the Spirit of Christ at baptism again at confirmation and daily throughout our lives. Therefore, this "Spirit of Christ" dwells within each one of us. What a precious gift!

This gift transformed the apostles' hearts and lives. From that closed Upper Room, these fear-filled apostles went, with joy and courage to bring Christ's message to the ends of the earth. The word "apostle" means "one who is sent", so, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the apostles became inspired channels of Christ's message to the world. St Paul tells us this same Spirit has been "poured into our hearts" and so, we too, are sent as messengers of Christ's love and healing to our world today.

Send me!

by Rachel Thompson

"But how do you know God is calling you?" pupils ask our visiting speakers on Vocations Day. The story of Pentecost can make recognising and responding to God seem very straightforward. Although, like our speakers, even the disciples can't describe their experience clearly: the Spirit is "like" wind and "like" fire. They do know, however, without doubt, that this is God. Having met God, the disciples did not wait for a plan: they rushed out to share God's love. Pentecost was just the beginning. Their actions in the rest of their lives witness to the reality of their experience, just as it's the years of lived vocation that speak to our pupils. It is the on-going work of our lives to explore the depths of who we are and discern our mission. Being faithful companions in both prayer and action is ultimately how we will recognise the reality of God and be able to communicate that love.

Rachel Thompson, in addition to being the Children's Editor for Redemptorist Publications, is also a full-time secondary school teacher.

"We are united by the fire of the Spirit, who sends us forth on mission."

Pope Francis

Well met!

by Canon Paul Douthwaite

We are regularly asked to prove who we are. Every time we contact the bank or pick up a parcel, we are asked for identification. Unfortunately, our modern world is flooded with imposters: people who are imitating others to take advantage, to plunder and pillage. As evidence we use our passport, driving licence or other documentation, but it is accepted that the best form of proof is to be physically recognised or acknowledged by another.

In biblical times there was a surplus of phoney prophets and mock messiahs, people who used the religious beliefs of the Hebrew people to take advantage and gain financially. In the post-resurrection period, the authorities decried Jesus as another of these deceptive imposters.

In appearing to his disciples, Jesus tells them that the promised Holy Spirit will act as a witness. He then adds that they too who have known him, seen his works and can identify him as the Son of God, must also be witnesses.

Canon Paul Douthwaite is the National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons and HMPPS Roman Catholic Faith Adviser.

Holy Spirit of love, here I am. Send me. ✠ Amen.

Today:	Monday:	Tuesday:	Wednesday:	Thursday:	Friday:	Saturday:	Next Sunday:
Vigil Mass Genesis 11:1-9 Exodus 19:3-8. 16-20 Ezekiel 37:1-14 Joel 3:1-5 Romans 8:22-27 John 7:37-39 **Mass During the Day** Acts 2:1-11 Galatians 5:16-25 John 15:26-27; 16:12-15	Genesis 3:9-15. 20 or Acts 1:12-14 John 19:25-34	Ecclesiasticus 35:1-15 Mark 10:28-31	Ecclesiasticus 36:1. 4-5. 10-17 Mark 10:32-45	Ecclesiasticus 42:15-25 Mark 10:46-52	(E&W) Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal High Priest (Feast): Jeremiah 31:31-34 or Hebrews 10:11-18; Mark 14:22-25	Ecclesiasticus 44:1. 9-13 Mark 11:11-26	Ecclesiasticus 51:17-27 Mark 11:27-33	Deuteronomy 4:32-34. 39-40 Romans 8:14-17 Matthew 28:16-20

redemptorist publications **Sunday Plus.** Edited by Denis McBride C.Ss.R. and Sr Janet Fearns FMDM. Copyright © Redemptorist Publications, Chawton, Hampshire GU34 3HQ, A registered charity limited by guarantee. Registered in England 03261721. www.rpbooks.co.uk. Printed on FSC approved paper.

www.facebook.com/sundayplus