

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year B - Feast of Pentecost

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.



“Receive the Holy Spirit.”

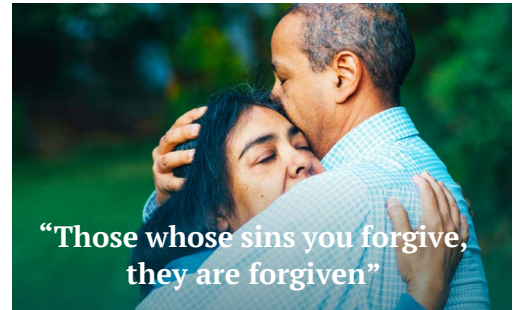
LECTIO STEPS - The five ‘Rs’: *Reading, Recognising, Responding, Resting, Reflecting.*

Gospel: John 20:19-23

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

¹⁹In the evening of the same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were for fear of some of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, ‘Peace be with you,’ ²⁰and after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord.

²¹And he said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.’ ²²After saying this he breathed on them and said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ ²³Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; those whose sins you retain, they are retained.’



Living the Word- Meditate on the Way Podcast

Lectio communities are now meeting for the Pentecost series. The podcast Living the Word - Meditate on the Way will accompany the series and is available on the website: lectio.newrydominican.com.

Reading

Pentecost celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. The Greek word Pentecost means 'fifty' – situating the feast day fifty days after Easter Sunday.

The passage recalls the encounter between the Risen Jesus and his dejected disciples who, in the aftermath of his crucifixion, are languishing behind the 'closed doors' of fear, loss, grief and guilt.

The Risen Jesus breathes his Spirit into the disciples - the Spirit of peace, love and joy – transforming their heavy hearts, transfiguring their broken spirits and empowering them with a new lease of life and love.

Now that they know from experience their own need of mercy, Jesus entrusts them with the important work of continuing his mission of bringing healing and forgiveness in the world.

Recognising

Let this beautiful passage speak to your life experience – an event, happening or relationship where you have experienced something similar to that situation as described in the Gospel: be it in your own personal life, the life of others, the church, the country or the world (MEDITATION STAGE). Allow the memory and the passage to get to know each other and discover all that they have in com-

mon, until you feel to say, 'I recognize this passage!' This is truly Good News: the Risen Jesus is alive and at work among us, doing today what he did long ago.

“He said to them, “Peace be with you.”

Can you remember a greeting of peace that lifted your heart? (The greeting of the Risen Jesus has lived again).

“The disciples were filled with joy when he said “Peace be with you”.

Did you ever have the experience of taking a risk and opening up to someone about your shortcoming, wounds or imperfections? To your great relief and joy you were met with acceptance, understanding and love, which set your heart free. (It was an experience of the Holy Spirit breathing new life in you.)

He breathed on them and said “Receive the Holy Spirit”

Can you remember an experience when you or your family or community retreated behind the “closed doors” at a time of loss, depression, failure, guilt, or low self-esteem? Who were the people who came behind those “closed doors” and, by their respectful presence, understanding and compassion, lifted your heart and spirit and breathed new life into you? (In these people you have encountered the Risen Jesus today)

Can you remember a significant event or happening in your community, church or country

that lifted the hearts and minds of all, inspiring hope and renewing faith in a brighter future? (This was a new Pentecost in the life of your community)

“Those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven,”

Remember a time when you experienced in yourself a surprising generosity of heart and you showed forgiveness to someone who had wronged you. You just knew that it was God’s doing. (This was God’s mercy living in you today) Or perhaps you have been overwhelmed by someone’s mercy towards you?

“Those whose sins you retain, they are retained.”

Or remember the times you failed to show forgiveness and how it left you imprisoned in anger and bitterness and stifled your spirit of freedom.

Responding

Having recognised God’s presence in life, you are invited to respond in your own words, in PRAYER (thanksgiving, repentance and petition). Below are sample prayers, please try to make your own specific to your meditation. In time you may feel to include in the prayer some words or phrases from the passage itself.

Gracious Lord, thank you for those who didn’t give up on us at times when we had messed up. With determination

they found their way behind our “closed doors”. They showed us acceptance, respect and love that gave us new heart, breathed a new spirit into us, new belief in ourselves and new hope for a better future. We now recognize how that experience has formed and shaped us and made us a little more merciful towards others.

Lord, we ask forgiveness for any lack of trust in your mercy and love that has left us trapped behind the “closed doors” of fear, guilt or shame and prevented us from living with freedom, joy and peace. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, there comes a time when we, as followers of your Son Jesus, feel tired, jaded, frustrated and disheartened. Send us new manifestations of the Risen Jesus who will come behind these “closed doors” to breathe new life into us, dispelling the fears and the doubts, and stirring up new enthusiasm and commitment for the mission of mercy that you have entrusted to us.

Resting

You are invited to enter deep prayer by simply resting your heart in God’s presence (CONTEMPLATIVE MOMENT). The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage might help you on this journey into greater silence and stillness e.g. “He breathed on them”.

Reflecting

From your journey with this passage, you are now invited to reflect, and put into your own words, any new insights or understanding that you have received (WISDOM MOMENT).

From your journey with this passage what

new understanding or insight has been given to you into mercy, peace, joy, or discipleship?

The only authentic bearers of mercy are those who have been touched by mercy themselves.



Reading

When the disciples are filled with so much fear about leaving Jesus on his own to die, their friend Jesus appears among them, showing that he still loves them and offers them a deep peace. Jesus turns their fear into joy. Jesus repeats his offer of peace before sending the disciples out with the breath of the Holy Spirit with a new focus of turning people's fear to joy.

Recognising

Can you remember a 'Jesus person', maybe a sibling, parent or grandparent, who continued to love you despite your mistakes or wrongdoings?

Can you remember a time when you were worried about something or someone, like the disciples, and a friend, like Jesus, came to you and turned your fear to joy?

Responding

Father, I thank You for the 'Jesus people' in my life, especially my parents, grandparents and friends, who have turned my fear to joy

and encouraged me to be a person who turns other people's fear into joy.

Father, I am sorry for the times that I let You down, that I let other people down by my mistakes and wrongdoings, especially when they needed me most.

Father, I ask that I may be a person who goes out with the breath of the Holy Spirit to be a change-maker, turning fear into joy, so that others may know, by my life, that Jesus is alive.

Resting

Rest in the loving embrace of the Father by repeating "JOY" for as long as it is possible. May your heart be filled with new joy as you are drawn deeper into the Father's presence.

Reflecting

Turning someone's fear into joy brings new life to a person, who can then share this new life with others.