

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year C - Feast of Pentecost

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.



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 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.'

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen?

This encounter between the Risen Jesus and his disciples takes place in Jerusalem, in the Upper Room. It was here, a few days previously, that Jesus had professed his love and washed their feet.

When does it happen?

It takes place on the evening of the first day of the week - Easter Sunday- after the horrific events of Good Friday. In our church tradition Pentecost (the Greek word for fiftieth) is celebrated 50 days after Easter Sunday.

Who is there?

The risen Jesus in his glorified state and his mystified disciples. Thomas is not present.

What happens?

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.

Suggested Guidelines to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

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

Can you remember a heartfelt greeting of peace that lifted your spirits?

“Jesus came (behind the closed doors)...

‘Peace be with you’ and he breathed (his Spirit) on them.”

Can you remember a time when you or someone else suffered behind the “closed doors” of sickness, grief, guilt, loss or failure? Remember the Jesus person who came behind those “closed doors” and “breathed” new life into you, inspiring you with a renewed belief in yourself and confidence for the future.

“As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.”

Can you remember a time when you recognized that someone had learned from their

past mistakes and was now ready to be trusted with new responsibility?

“Those whose sins you forgive they are forgiven...retained”

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.

Or remember the times you failed to show forgiveness and how it left you imprisoned in anger and bitterness.

“...he showed them his hands and his side.”

Can you remember meeting someone who had been healed of past hurts and it inspired in you a new strength and courage in dealing with your own?

What does this Gospel remind me of? *Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?*

Now I can see that God’s loving presence and action were in that life experience.

Prayer Response - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...

Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence.

An Invitation to Reflect

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

Action

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

Thought for the week

A powerful experience of selfless love releases all that is good and beautiful in the hearts of those who receive it.

Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.



Jesus came to His friends when they were afraid. He gave them His peace which helped them to be brave enough to continue His work.

Can you think of a person—a parent, teacher or carer—who helps you feel brave like Jesus wants us to be?

Draw or write about a time that person helped you feel peaceful or encouraged you to do something good.



Father, I thank You for the gift of this story which has helped me see that Jesus gives us courage and sends us out bravely. Help me to be brave today as I share Your love and peace with others.

Action: this week I will try to show love by...

Living the Word Podcast with Fr Joseph Ralph OP.

Feel free to listen each week at lectio.newrydominican.com or on the Spotify app.

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