

HOMILY FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY
8 June 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflections on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 63

Reading 1 Acts 2:1-11

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
they were all in one place together.
And suddenly there came from the sky
a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.
Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under
heaven staying in Jerusalem.
At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd,
but they were confused
because each one heard them
speaking in his own language.
They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
"Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?
Then how does each of us hear them
in his native language?
We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene,
as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues
of the mighty acts of God."

Responsorial Psalm Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

R. Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O LORD!
the earth is full of your creatures;
R. Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD be glad in his works!
Pleasing to him be my theme;
I will be glad in the LORD.
R. Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

If you take away their breath, they perish
and return to their dust.
When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.
R. Lord, send out your Spirit,
and renew the face of the earth.

Reading 2 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Brothers and sisters:
No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts
but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God
who produces all of them in everyone.
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many,
are one body, so also Christ.
For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel John 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,

Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."

When he had said this,
he showed them his hands and his side.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

And when he had said this,
he breathed on them and said to them,

"Receive the Holy Spirit.

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Today is Pentecost Sunday and I want to talk about the
Sacrament of Reconciliation.

God, the Father of Mercies
through the death and resurrection
of His Son,
has sent us the Holy Spirit
for the forgiveness of our sins.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, these words begin the
formula for absolution. When you sit with me and open
your heart in confessing your sins, I listen to the very best
of my ability and I impose my hands over your head. Then,
I pronounce these words that invoke the Holy Trinity. The
Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of
his Son, has sent us the Holy Spirit so that the sins that
afflict us might be forgiven.

It's the next line of the formula that I want you all to concentrate on the Pentecost Sunday.

Through the ministry of the Church,
may God grant you pardon and peace.

The Church's work is to bring pardon and peace into the world. Reconciliation is what the Church must be all about

But I need to be clear: I am not the Church. The Pope is not the Church. We are the Church. Pardon and peace come into the world through the compassion, the tenderness, and the patience of those who have the courage to forgive those who have trespassed against us. For this is what the Church is: the sacrament of God's reconciliation at work in the world.

Now, look at the Gospel for today's mass.

The Risen Lord appears to his disciples in the evening after their discovery of the empty tomb early that morning. And he says something important. After breathing over his disciples, the Risen One says,

Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained.

This is very important. The Holy Spirit has been "breathed" over the disciples. The Holy Spirit has been "poured out" into the Church. And now we - the Church - have a ministry: we are to forgive sins. We are called to be Christ's Sacrament of Reconciliation for the world.

In the formula for absolution, I impose my hands over your head and say,

God, the Father of Mercies
through the death and resurrection
of His Son,
has sent us the Holy Spirit
for the forgiveness of our sins.

Then I say,

Through the ministry of the Church,
may God grant you pardon and peace.

And finally, I say,

And I absolve you,
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

When I say this - when I say "I" absolve you - I am speaking
in your name. The Church absolves you. All of us absolve
you. All of us can absolve you because we have been given
this power by the Risen Christ.

But this is not merely a power. It is a responsibility. We
must practice forgiving one another. The Risen Christ
demands this of us. We must work every day at being the
Sacrament of Reconciliation for the world.

Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained.

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Hoy día es Pentecostés. Me gustaría reflexionar con Uds
sobre el Sacramento de Reconciliación.

Dios, el Padre de Misericordia,
por la muerte y resurrección de su Hijo,
nos ha enviado al Espíritu Santo
para el perdón de los pecados.

En el Sacramento de Reconciliación, estas palabras inician
la fórmula de absolución. Cuando se sienta conmigo y
abre su corazón para confesar sus pecados, le escucho con
la mayor atención posible e impongo mis manos sobre su
cabeza. Luego, pronuncio estas palabras que invocan a la
Santísima Trinidad. El Padre de Misericordia, por la muerte
y resurrección de su Hijo, nos ha enviado al Espíritu Santo
para que los pecados que nos afligen sean perdonados.

Es en la siguiente línea de la fórmula en la que quiero que todos se concentren hoy.

Por el ministerio de la Iglesia,
que Dios te conceda perdón y paz.

El perdón y la paz vienen al mundo por el ministerio de la Iglesia. La reconciliación es obra de la Iglesia.

Pero debo ser claro: yo no soy la Iglesia. El Papa no es la Iglesia. Nosotros somos la Iglesia. El perdón y la paz llegan al mundo mediante la compasión, la ternura y la paciencia de quienes tienen la valentía de perdonar a quienes nos han ofendido. Porque la Iglesia es un sacramento de reconciliación de Dios para el mundo.

Ahora, vean el Evangelio de la misa de hoy.

El Señor Resucitado se aparece a sus discípulos al anochecer, tras descubrir la tumba vacía muy en la madrugada. Y dice algo importante a Uds. Tras soplar sobre sus discípulos, el Resucitado dice:

Reciban el Espíritu Santo.
A los que les perdonen los pecados,
les quedarán perdonados;
y a los que no se los perdonen,
les quedarán sin perdonar.

Esto es muy importante. El Espíritu Santo ha sido "infundido" sobre los discípulos. El Espíritu Santo ha sido "derramado" en la Iglesia. Y ahora nosotros, la Iglesia, tenemos un ministerio: perdonar los pecados. Estamos llamados a ser el Sacramento de la Reconciliación de Cristo para el mundo.

En la fórmula de la absolución, impongo mis manos sobre tu cabeza y digo:

Dios, el Padre de Misericordia,
por la muerte y resurrección de su Hijo,
nos ha enviado al Espíritu Santo
para el perdón de los pecados.

Luego digo:

Por el ministerio de la Iglesia,
que Dios te conceda perdón y paz.

Y finalmente, digo:

Y te absuelvo,
en el nombre del Padre,
y del Hijo
y del Espíritu Santo.

Cuando digo esto –cuando digo «Yo» te absuelvo– hablo por todos nosotros. La Iglesia te absuelve. Todos te absuelven. Todos podemos absolverte porque Cristo Resucitado nos ha dado este poder.

Pero esto no es solo un poder. Es una responsabilidad. Debemos practicar el perdón. Cristo Resucitado nos lo exige. Debemos trabajar cada día para ser el Sacramento de la Reconciliación para el mundo.

Reciban el Espíritu Santo.
A los que les perdonen los pecados,
les quedarán perdonados;
y a los que no se los perdonen,
les quedarán sin perdonar.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't

rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually “reading” the Bible. Rather, we are “listening” to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?