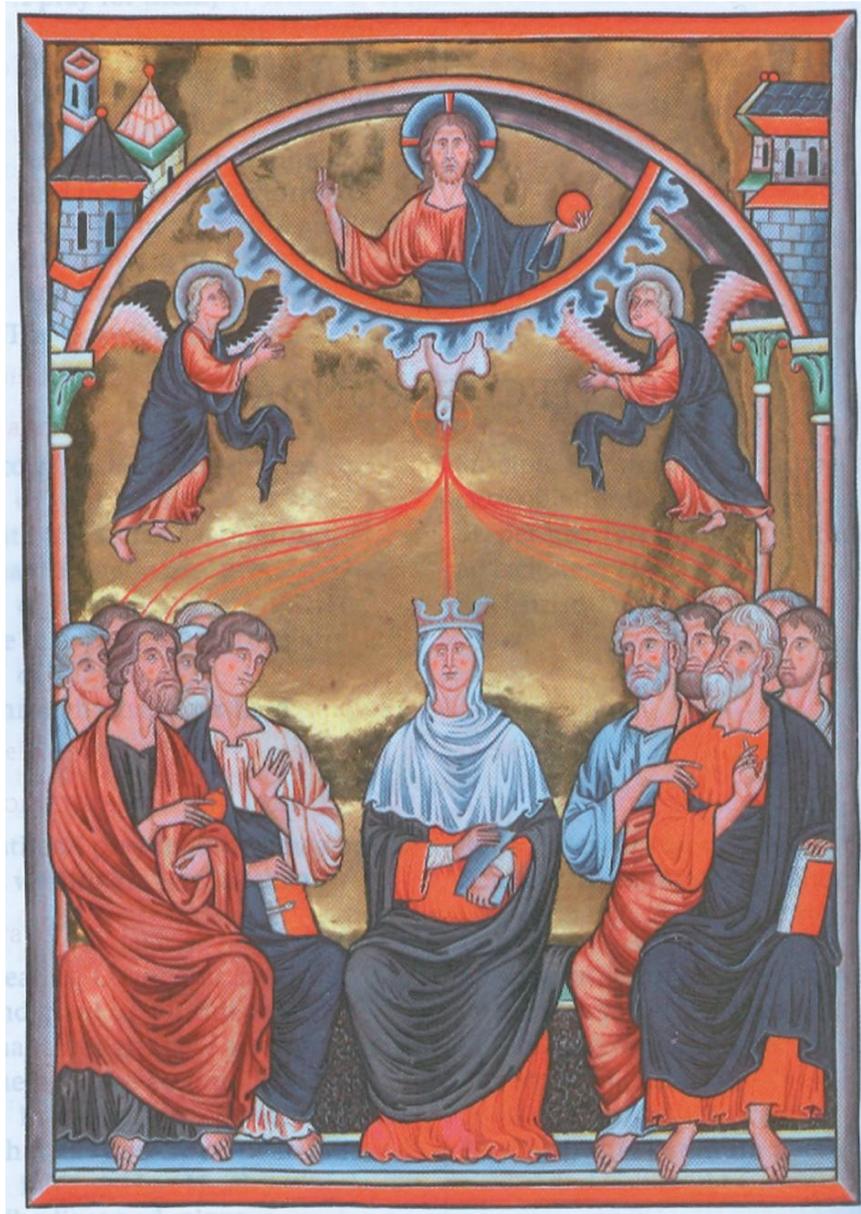


# PENTECOST SUNDAY

## Vigil Readings



The Holy Spirit is first and foremost a Creator Spirit, hence Pentecost is also a feast of creation. For us Christians, the world is the fruit of an act of love by God who has made all things and in which he rejoices because it is “good”, it is “very good”, as the creation narrative tells us (cr Genesis 1:1-31). Consequently, God is not totally Other, unnameable and obscure. God reveals himself; he has a face. God is reason, God is will, God is love, God is beauty. Faith in the Creator Spirit and faith in the Spirit whom the Risen Christ gave to the Apostles and gives to each one of us are therefore inseparably united. The Gospel passage offers us a marvellous image to clarify the connection between Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father: the Holy Spirit is portrayed as the breath of the Risen Jesus Christ. Here the Evangelist John takes up an image of the creation narrative, where it says that God breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life (cr Genesis 2:7). The breath of God is life. Now, the Lord breathes into our soul the new breath of life, the Holy Spirit, his most intimate essence, and in this way welcomes us into God’s family. With Baptism and Confirmation this gift was given to us specifically, and with the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance it is continuously repeated: the Lord breathes a breath of life into our soul.

*(Pope Benedict XVI)*

My Dear Friends, Brothers and Sisters in S. Lazarus,

*“He who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.”*

Birthdays provide us with the opportunity to stop and reflect about life’s journey. We speak of coming of age and of significant milestones. Pentecost Sunday is traditionally called the birth-day of the Church, so perhaps today is a good day for the whole Church, once again, to take stock and reflect on the story of the last two thousand years. At the same time, hopefully, we will be able to see connections, piece together the jigsaw of our own lives and see the wider picture more clearly. Hopefully, too, we will be able to recognise that it is not only the good times but even the bad and difficult times that help to shape us, and to realise the truth that God can turn everything to good.

All the resurrection stories are shrouded in mystery and the apostles remain hesitant and uncertain as to what is happening: it would take them time to put the jigsaw together. But, when the day of Pentecost arrives, every- thing changes. Dramatically they are transformed. The hesitation and the uncertainty are gone and everything begins to fall into place. Full of courage, they go out and proclaim the message of Jesus’ resurrection and his message of salvation. The people are amazed because they can all understand what is being said, but, of course, the language spoken by the apostles was the language of love and that is a universal language.

If we allow the Spirit of God to open our hearts and remind us of all that Jesus has taught us, then we will speak the language of love and Christ will redeem our lives and the life of the Church. We will see again that the gifts of the Spirit – wisdom, knowledge, understanding, courage, right judgement, awe and reverence – enable us to put everything into God’s perspective. We will experience, as individuals and as a community, the fact that the Lord can indeed turn everything to good. He is with us, as he always has been.

I have attached the readings and prayers for the Pentecost Vigil (before the reforms it had much the same shape as the great Easter Vigil - but it is now in a much simpler form) - I hope you will find them useful in preparing for the Feast tomorrow, which will sadly have to be celebrated at home or via the Internet. Let us pray God to be soon released from this pestilence and returned to the regular worship of God and His lifegiving Sacraments.

**Fr Andrew Stevens SChLJ**  
**Chaplain-General**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

**Amen.**

**Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie eleison**

**Christe eleison  
Christe eleison**

**Kyrie eleison  
Kyrie eleison**

Dear brethren  
we have now begun our  
Pentecost Vigil,  
after the example of the Apostles and disciples  
who with Mary, the Mother of  
Jesus, persevered in prayer,  
awaiting the Spirit promised  
by the Lord;  
like them, let us, too, listen with quiet  
hearts to the Word of God.  
Let us meditate on how many  
great deeds  
God in times past did for his people  
and let us pray that the Holy Spirit,  
whom the Father sent as the first  
fruits for those who believe,  
may bring to perfection his work  
in the world.

## FIRST READING

A reading from the book of Genesis 11:1-9

*It was named Babel because there the language of the whole earth was confused.*

Throughout the earth men spoke the same language, with the same vocabulary. Now as they moved eastwards they found a plain in the land of Shinar where they settled. They said to one another, 'Come, let us make bricks and bake them in the fire.' - For stone they used bricks, and for mortar they used bitumen. - 'Come,' they said 'let us build ourselves a town and a tower with its top reaching heaven. Let us make a name for ourselves, so that we may not be scattered about the whole earth.' Now the Lord came down to see the town and the tower that the sons of man had built. 'So they are all a single people with a single language!' said the Lord. 'This is but the start of their undertakings! There will be nothing too hard for them to do. Come, let us go down and confuse their language on the spot so that they can no longer understand one another.' The Lord scattered them thence over the whole face of the earth, and they stopped building the town. It was named Babel therefore, because there the Lord confused the language of the whole earth. It was from there that the Lord scattered them over the whole face of the earth.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

*R. Happy the people the Lord has chosen as his own.*

He frustrates the designs of the nations,  
he defeats the plans of the peoples.  
His own designs shall stand for ever,  
the plans of his heart from age to age.

***R. Happy the people the Lord has chosen as his own.***

They are happy, whose God is the Lord,  
the people he has chosen as his own.  
From the heavens the Lord looks forth,  
he sees all the children of men. **R.**

From the place where he dwells he gazes  
on all the dwellers on the earth,  
he who shapes the hearts of them all  
and considers all their deeds. **R.**

Let us pray.

Grant, we pray, almighty God,  
that your Church may always  
remain that holy people,  
formed as one by the unity  
of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
which manifests to the world  
the Sacrament of your holiness  
and unity  
and leads it to the perfection  
of your charity.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## SECOND READING

A reading from the book of Exodus 19:3-8,16-20

*The Lord came down on the mountain of Sinai before all the people.*

Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, ‘Say this to the House of Jacob, declare this to the sons of Israel, “You yourselves have seen what I did with the Egyptians, how I carried you on eagle’s wings and brought you to myself. From this you know that now, if you obey my voice and hold fast to my covenant, you of all the nations shall be my very own, for all the earth is mine. I will count you a kingdom of priests, a consecrated nation.” Those are the words you are to speak to the sons of Israel.’ So Moses went and summoned the elders of the people, putting before them all that the Lord had bidden him. Then all the people answered as one, ‘All that the Lord has said, we will do.’

Now at daybreak on the third day there were peals of thunder on the mountain and lightning flashes, a dense cloud, and a loud trumpet blast, and inside the camp all the people trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. The mountain of Sinai was entirely wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended on it in the form of fire. Like smoke from a furnace the smoke went up, and the whole mountain shook violently. Louder and louder grew the sound of the trumpet. Moses spoke, and God answered him with peals of thunder. The Lord came down on the mountain of Sinai, on the mountain top, and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

*R. You have the message of eternal life, O Lord.*

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,  
it gives wisdom to the simple.

**R. You have the message of eternal life, O Lord.**

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,  
it gives light to the eyes. **R.**

The fear of the Lord is holy,  
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth  
and all of them just. **R.**

They are more to be desired than gold,  
than the purest of gold  
and sweeter are they than honey,  
than honey from the comb. **R.**

Let us pray.

O God, who in fire and lightning  
gave the ancient Law to Moses  
on Mount Sinai  
and on this day manifested  
the new covenant  
in the fire of the Spirit,  
grant, we pray,  
that we may always be aflame  
with that same Spirit  
whom you wondrously poured out  
on your Apostles,  
and that the new Israel,  
gathered from every people,  
may receive with rejoicing  
the eternal commandment  
of your love.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### THIRD READING

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

*Dry bones, I am going to make the breath enter you, and you will live.*

The hand of the Lord was laid on me, and he carried me away by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley, a valley full of bones. He made me walk up and down among them. There were vast quantities of these bones on the ground the whole length of the valley; and they were quite dried up. He said to me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’ I said, ‘You know, Lord.’ He said, ‘Prophesy over these bones. Say, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. The Lord says this to these bones: I am now going to make the breath enter you, and you will live. I shall put sinews on you, I shall make flesh grow on you, I shall cover you with skin and give you breath, and you will live, and you will learn that I am the Lord.”’ I prophesied as I had been ordered. While I was prophesying, there was a noise, a sound of clattering; and the bones joined together. I looked, and saw that they were covered with sinews; flesh was growing on them and skin was covering them, but there was no breath in them. He said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man. Say to the breath, “The Lord says this: Come from the four winds, breath; breathe on these dead; let them live!”’ I prophesied as he had ordered me, and the breath entered them; they came to life again and stood up on their feet, a great, an immense army.

Then he said, ‘Son of man, these bones are the whole House of Israel. They keep saying, “Our bones are dried up, our hope has gone; we are as good as dead.” So prophesy. Say to them, “The Lord says this: I am now going to open your graves; I mean to raise you from your graves, my people, and lead you back to the soil of Israel. And you will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and raise you from your graves, my people. And I shall put my spirit in you, and you will live, and I shall resettle you on your own soil; and you will know that I, the Lord have said and done this – it is the Lord who speaks.”’

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

*R. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his love has no end.*

Let them say this, the Lord's redeemed,  
whom he redeemed from the hand of the foe  
and gathered from far-off lands,  
from east and west, north and south.

*R. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
for his love has no end.*

Some wandered in the desert, in the wilderness,  
finding no way to a city they could dwell in.  
Hungry they were and thirsty;  
their soul was fainting within them. **R.**

Then they cried to the Lord in their need  
and he rescued them from their distress  
and he led them along the right way,  
to reach a city they could dwell in. **R.**

Let them thank the Lord for his love,  
for the wonders he does for men.  
For he satisfies the thirsty soul;  
he fills the hungry with good things. **R.**

Let us pray.

Lord, God of power,  
who restores what has fallen  
and preserves what you have  
restored, increase, we pray, the  
peoples  
to be renewed by the sanctification  
of your name,  
that all who are washed clean  
by holy Baptism  
may always be directed  
by your prompting.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FOURTH READING

A reading from the prophet Joel

*I will pour out my spirit on all people.*

Thus says the Lord:

‘I will pour out my spirit on all mankind.  
Your sons and daughters shall prophesy,  
your old men shall dream dreams,  
and your young men see visions.  
Even on the slaves, men and women,  
will I pour out my spirit in those days.  
I will display portents in heaven and on earth,  
blood and fire and columns of smoke.’

The sun will be turned into darkness,  
and the moon into blood,  
before the day of the Lord dawns,  
that great and terrible day.

All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved,  
for on Mount Zion there will be some who have escaped,  
as the Lord has said,  
and in Jerusalem some survivors whom the Lord will call.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm

*R. Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.*

Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,  
wrapped in light as in a robe!

***R. Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.***

How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
Bless the Lord, my soul. **R.**

All of these look to you  
to give them their food in due season.  
You give it, they gather it up:  
you open your hand, they have their fill. **R.**

You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth. **R.**

Let us pray

Fulfil for us your gracious promise,  
O Lord, we pray,  
so that by his coming  
the Holy Spirit may make us  
witnesses before the world  
to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Who lives and reigns  
for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

## THE GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.  
We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High,  
Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
**Amen.**

Let us pray

Almighty ever-living God,  
who willed the Paschal Mystery  
to be encompassed as a sign  
in fifty days,  
grant that from out  
of the scattered nations  
the confusion of many tongues  
may be gathered by heavenly grace

into one great confession  
of your name.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

## THE EPISTLE

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 8:22-27

*The Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words.*

From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free. For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved - our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were - but, as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet - it is something we must wait for with patience.

The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in, our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**R. Alleluia, alleluia!**

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

## THE GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

**Glory to you O Lord**

*From his breast shall flow fountains of living water.*

On the last day and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood there and cried out:

‘If any man is thirsty, let him come to me!

Let the man come and drink who believes in me!’

As scripture says: From his breast shall flow fountains of living water.

He was speaking of the Spirit which those who believed in him were to receive; for there was no Spirit as yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**