



Impact

Discipleship. Stewardship. Evangelization.

June, 2019 In June, we celebrate the fullness of the mystery of God through pivotal feasts and solemnities: the Ascension of the Lord, Pentecost, Holy Trinity, Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Each invites us to focus on who God is and who we are called to be as God's people. This month's issue of Impact is an extended reflection on the Holy Spirit, ever-present and yet often-hard-to-understand. We pray this month in a particular way for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon you and all in your community.— Leisa Anslinger and Amberly Borschinger

Homily Connections

June 2: Today's readings all provide glimpses into the experience of the apostles after the resurrection of Jesus, leading up to and including his ascension. In this final Sunday prior to Pentecost, the readings re-cap the mysteries we have reflected upon during Lent and Easter, and anticipate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Connecting with everyday life: Today, we are reminded that the faith which we hold in Jesus Christ is rooted in the first-hand witness of these followers of the Lord. Like the apostles who journeyed with the Lord and witnessed to God's saving acts in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, we, too, are called to show and share Christ's love. What does this look like in daily life? Reflect on your own life and recall examples parishioners have shared with you of the ways in which we may witness to our faith through our words and actions. (Page 2, bottom)

June 9: There are multiple options for today's readings. All of them provide windows into the life, gifts, and presence of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers the apostles to proclaim the gospel in numerous languages, so that all may learn of God's saving love. The Spirit brings peace; through the Spirit, we are able to claim Jesus as our Lord and Savior. The Spirit gives spiritual gifts; the Spirit gives us life and incorporates us into Christ's body. The Spirit is our Advocate who will teach us God's ways.

Connecting with everyday life: Think of a specific example from your own life in which you have recognized the gifts of the Holy Spirit, alive and active. Paint the picture of this experience, so that you may lead your people to reflect on the gift and presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. (Pages 1 and 2)

June 16: On today's Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, we hear of the wisdom of God, present before and during the creation of the world. We ponder the love of God, which has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We hear Jesus declare that the Spirit of truth will guide us to all truth, so that we may come to know the Father.

Connecting with everyday life: Today's readings and solemnity may feel abstract to many of your people. Today's second reading may provide a launching point from which you may lead your people to reflect — with the hope of God's love with us and the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, we will find the strength we need to live as people of faith and disciples of our Lord.. Ask them to think about the difference this hope makes as they face challenges, trials, and opportunities in their lives. (Pages 1 and 2)

June 23: It always seems fitting that we make the transition back to Ordinary Time with the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God's abundant love is poured out in every celebration of the Eucharist. Through our participation in the Eucharist, we are shaped and formed, fed and strengthened to live as Christ's people.

Connecting with everyday life: Invite your people to think about their gifts, talents, and resources. Now, ask them to place themselves in the scene of the gospel. Jesus asks them to bring what might feel like their meager gifts to him. When they are willing, the Lord will bless them, they will be broken open, and their gifts will be multiplied, pointing to the love and glory of God. Ask them today, to renew their commitment to embrace this life of discipleship and stewardship. (Page 2)

At Parish Meetings or in Adult Faith Formation this Month

Opening Prayer

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.

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.

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.

- Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Listen to Sacred Scripture: Select one of the readings from Pentecost.

Read: The article on page 1 of the June issue of Impact.

Share: What experience comes to mind in which you recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit with you?

Commit: Pray to the Holy Spirit throughout this month. Ask the Spirit to inspire you to live as a Christian disciple and steward. Commit to make one specific action in response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Wind. Fire. Presence.

Do you sometimes feel uncertain and confused? Does your life need direction? Are you tired, stressed, anxious, or afraid? Most of us have moments when we could answer yes to all of those questions!

The disciples waited in the upper room at Jesus' command, uncertain, confused, and fearful. After the experience of Jesus' passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, they needed to be assured of God's presence. They needed direction. They waited in hope for the promised Advocate to come, even though they were not sure what they were waiting for. They may have sung Psalm 104 as they waited and prayed: "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth." On Pentecost the Holy Spirit came, and their lives were forever changed! Imagine their surprise when, filled with the Holy Spirit, their uncertainty and confusion was transformed into clear and compelling witness; their fear turned into bold proclamation of God's saving love, and the Church was born.

Words often fail us when we try to describe the Holy Spirit. Images don't come easily either. We read in the Acts of the Apostles about tongues of fire. Yet, after that first outpouring of the Holy Spirit, those tongues of fire have not again appeared. That does not mean that the Holy Spirit is not present. In faith, we rely on the Spirit to fill our hearts and minds, to strengthen us when we are weak; give us wisdom in baffling situations; and prompt us to live good and holy lives. Sacred Scripture tells us that we cannot follow Jesus without the Holy Spirit! (1 Cor 12:3B, Second Reading at Pentecost)

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God's love, abundant, overflowing, greater than we can ask or imagine. That power of love dwells within us, through the outpouring of the Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation. God's unfailing love, which is stronger than death and all of the confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty in our lives, is always with us.

The same Spirit who gave the apostles direction and courage is within you. God waits for you to call, "Lord, send out your Spirit!" Open yourself to the surprising strength and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Allow the Spirit to act. Let yourself be renewed in God's love. Then, through the presence of the Spirit, everyone you encounter may be touched by the abundant love of God. Then, through your cooperation with the Holy Spirit, the Lord will renew the face of the earth! ©Catholic Life and Faith, 2019

Impact this month

Reflect on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. How does each give you what you need to live as a follower of Jesus in your daily life?

Wisdom

Understanding

Knowledge

Right Judgment

Courage

Reverence

Wonder and Awe of the Lord

Take time at the end of each day or each week this month to think about any situations in which you needed or used these gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thank God for these gifts and ask the Spirit to activate them anew!

"Then we discover the new name of God, the name revealed by Jesus, of the Spirit, the Holy Spirit; the Father will send a "Paraclete." It is a beautiful name, meaning literally "the one who answers the cry or the call," like a mother who takes in her arms her weeping child. She is a paraclete. **The name of God is "the one who answers the cry."** - Jean Vanier

When has God answered your cry? How have you experienced the consolation and strength of the Paraclete?

Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, communities of people with disabilities who work and live together, died last month. He was known throughout the world for his compassion for the most vulnerable and his deep spiritual insights.

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Boldly and with compassion...

One of my favorite prayers is the one prayed before all of the sessions of Vatican II. The line that always strikes me in this prayer is “may we serve boldly and with compassion.” The two, boldness and compassion, might seem on the surface to be at odds with one another. Boldness in discipleship is rooted in a love of and commitment to Christ. In Jesus, God suffered the pain of rejection, betrayal, mocking, derision, physical torture, and death. Jesus remained true to God’s compassionate way through it all. We might say that Christ’s way *is* the way of bold compassion — of being with and for God and others and finding the courage and strength to do so when it would be easier to walk away and play it safe. To be truly compassionate — to suffer with another — requires a commitment to be with the other when the person is most vulnerable and in need. Strong in the Lord, we feel secure and can be bold enough to share in the other’s pain, offer help, solace, and consolation.

It is only possible to serve boldly and with compassion through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we listen to the stories of the early communities of believers in the Acts of the Apostles and when we think of the saints and the saintly people we have known in our lives, we will likely realize that each served “boldly and with compassion.” The Holy Spirit prompts us to see with the eyes of God and respond as God desires. The Spirit gives us what we need to do so. This is what it means to grow in holiness, which is our vocation as God’s people. As we celebrate Pentecost, let us take to heart this call, to live as Spirit-filled people who serve boldly and with compassion. — Leisa Anslinger