

JUNE, 2019

BRING FAITH TO LIFE.
FIND LIFE IN FAITH.

Impact

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

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!

“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.



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!



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