

# Pentecost Sunday of Easter

## Gospel Reading *John 20: 19-23*

Jesus appears to his disciples and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### Reflection on the Gospel Reading

The season of Easter concludes with today's celebration, the feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem; this event marks the beginning of the Church. The story of Pentecost is found in the Acts of the Apostles, today's first reading.

The account in today's Gospel, taken from the Gospel of John, also recounts how Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his disciples. There is no need to try to reconcile these two accounts to each other.

It is enough to know that, after his death, Jesus fulfilled his promise to send to his disciples a helper, an advocate, who would enable them to be his witnesses throughout the world.

We previously heard today's Gospel on the second Sunday of Easter. At that time, we also heard the passage that follows, which describes Jesus' appearance to Thomas. In that context, we were led to reflect on belief and unbelief.

In the context of the feast of Pentecost, this reading reminds us about the integral connection between the gifts of peace and forgiveness and the action of the Holy Spirit. Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace.

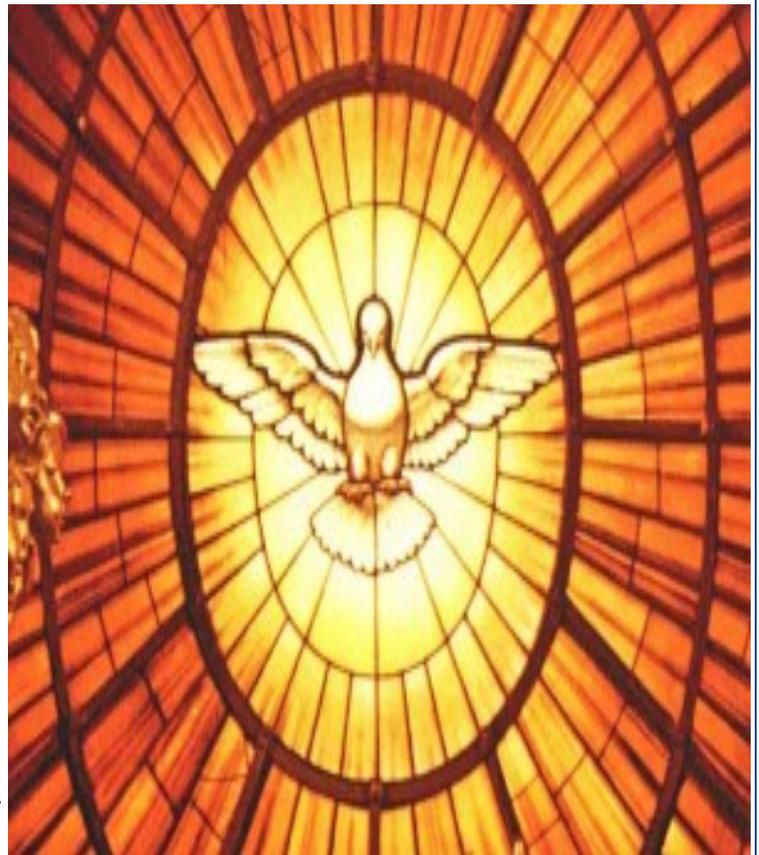
Jesus then commissions his disciples to continue the work that he has begun, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you." As he breathes the Holy Spirit upon them, Jesus sends his disciples to continue his work of reconciliation through the forgiveness of sins.

This Gospel reminds us that the Church is called to be a reconciling presence in the world.

This reconciling presence of Christ is celebrated in the Church's sacramental life. In the Sacrament of Baptism, we are washed clean from sin and become a new creation in Christ.

In the Sacrament of Penance, the Church celebrates the mercy of God in forgiving sins. This reconciling presence is also to be a way of life for Christians. In situations of conflict, we are to be agents of peace and harmony among people.

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### *Church of St Francis Xavier*

135 Jalan Gasing (Section 10), 46000 Petaling Jaya. Tel: 03-7956 5977 Fax: 03-7957 2435

Website: [www.sfx.com.my](http://www.sfx.com.my) Phone App: SFX PJ E-mail: [sfxchurchpj@gmail.com](mailto:sfxchurchpj@gmail.com)

Parish Priest: Rev Fr Norris Seenivasan, SJ, Asst Parish Priest: Rev Fr Alvin Ho, SJ