

Pentecost Sunday

John 20:19-23

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The greatest threat to the growth of any community is fear. Jesus knew this when he appeared to dishearten disciples huddled behind locked doors. The fledgling Christian community faced a huge challenge—essentially to do the Father’s will in Jesus’ absence. The first disciples surely could not do this on their own. Jesus’ appearance on a Jewish feast—a day when the rest of the world was celebrating—and the gifts he brought for those he loved secured the future of Christianity.

Everything that Jesus said and did was about his Father’s will. It was the reason Jesus suffered, died, and rose from the dead. And, through his suffering, death, and resurrection he revealed that his Father is *our Father too*. So, for those who believe in Jesus Christ, the Sent One, it follows that they will also desire to serve the Father’s will.

Jesus is present to us with special gifts to promote our growth in holiness and our love of neighbor. The gifts of Pentecost are peace, the gift of mission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit through whom believers are empowered do what Jesus did.

Jesus greets his fearful disciples with “Peace to you.” (John 20:19) All their betrayals, doubts, and fears that what happened to Jesus would happen to them are forgiven. As they recognize him, fear turns to joy. In their joy, Jesus says “...I send you” (v. 21) and breathes on them saying, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (v.23) gifting them with strength and new energy. These are the very gifts that Jesus received as God’s only Son and he takes them from himself and gives them to his first disciples and to us.

As believers, we rejoice in knowing that all our failures and foibles are forgiven. In prayer, let us be at peace, commit to Jesus’ mission, and accept the Holy Spirit who strengthens us be the best disciples we can be. We thank our Father, his Son, and the Holy Spirit, for God’s great love gifted to each and every one of us.