

“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”
John 14

Eighth Week in Ordinary Time: May 27 - June 2, 2007

The Eighth Week of Ordinary Time

Sunday, May 27 is **Pentecost Sunday**, as the readings and the whole Church celebrate the coming and ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit among us. Jesus breathes on his jittery followers and tells them, "Peace be with you" and fills them with courage.

Thursday is the **Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Friday is the **Memorial of Saint Justin, martyr**.

The first readings this week are from Sirach, with their beautiful seeking of Wisdom. With **Pentecost Sunday** we conclude the "Alleluia!" of the Easter season and resume reading **Mark's Gospel**, picking up where we stopped just before the beginning of Lent.

During the week, **Mark's Gospel** offers us stories about sacrificing part of ourselves. We hear of the Rich Young Man: "Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." At that statement, his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Peter tells Jesus, "We have given up everything and followed you." Jesus responds, "there is no one who has given up house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for my sake and for the sake of the Gospel who will not receive a hundred times more." When the disciples squabble over who will sit in glory with Jesus, he tells them, "the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many." Jesus turns over the sellers tables in the temple as the religious authorities look for a way to put him to death. When they try to entrap him with their questions, Jesus asks them about John the Baptist's baptism. They refuse to answer and Jesus says, "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Daily Prayer This Week

This week we can find a lot of encouragement in the Pentecost readings. The disciples, this most human group of Jesus' followers, have opened their hearts to the Holy Spirit and found new courage. They shed their fears and boldly began doing what they longed to do - spread the good news.

We, too, can find that courage in our lives. The same joyous strength that opened their hearts can touch ours in ways we can hardly imagine. We only have to ask!

As we go through our week, in the smallest moments of the day, we can beg God for the strength of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we awaken in the morning, sort laundry or do the dishes, we can change our attitudes toward these chores and see them as sacred moments of invitation from the God who loves us with such fire and compassion.

Dear Lord, you know how filled I am with fears. Let each moment of anxiety today be a reminder to open my life, my heart and my soul to the love and courage you offer me. I know that if only I could trust in you more, it would change my life.

"He went away sad, for he had many possessions!" Let me turn these apprehensions over to you. I beg you to give me the wisdom and strength I need to trust more and to fear less. Teach me that it's OK to stop clinging to the fears I have known for so long and that I can embrace the freedom you offer me. Let me be less fear-ful and more generous.

We can find the courage to proclaim the good news as the disciples did at Pentecost, simply by asking God for that strength and then living as if we received it. It is not about the amount of time, but about an *awareness* of God's presence in our lives. Believing and trusting in that love and grace, we can find the humility to say, "I'm sorry" to someone we have hurt. We can take a moment to write a note or an e-mail telling a suffering friend we are praying for them.

The week closes with **Trinity Sunday**, which always follows Pentecost. It celebrates the un-knowable relationship between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit - and their loving support for us in our lives.

"When he comes, the Spirit of truth, will guide you to all truth..."

And all day long, as we run our errands or sit at our desks, we can take a moment to say "Thank you" to the God on whom we have such an utter dependence and who loves us with such abandon.