

**First Reading:** Acts 2:1-11  
**Response:** “*Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth*” (Ps.103:30)  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 103:1,24,29-31,34  
**Second Reading:** 1 Cor.12:3-7,12-13  
**Gospel:** John 20:19-23

*If you saw the person who promised you everlasting life die, how shattered would be your dreams, your future life, your faith in the person who promised you so?*

The disciples having not yet received the Spirit, could not fully understand the resurrection and the full reality of the Risen Lord in their midst, even after he had shown himself physically and let them touch him. The Holy Spirit will teach them everything.

Living in the Spirit, they will see, not with the eyes of flesh but with the eyes of faith. They will be charismatic, like Christ, sharing his life and gifts. Here ends the confusion of Babel. “*They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages*” (Acts 2:3)

The language of the Spirit is communication of power and love, uniting all into one body of Christ. “*How does it happen that each of us hears them in our own native tongue?*” (Acts 2:8). Life in the Spirit is not only how one speaks but how one believes and acts.

Such a person, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaims the glory of God. “*Lord God how great you are, how many your works*” (Ps.103:24); and sees it all around, “*the earth is full of your riches*” (Ps.103:24).

The Old Testament prophetically proclaims the Spirit of God and a new age of re-creation. “*You send forth your Spirit and you will renew the face of the earth*” (Ps.103:30).

The greatest gift of the Spirit is that you can see the Risen Lord with the eyes of faith: “*No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit*” (1Cor. 12:3).

So life in the Spirit is the fulfilment of the resurrection where we die to self and rise to new life. In the Risen Lord we see our resurrection. He shows us that he is fully alive and “*showed his hands and his side*” (Jn.20:21).

The Risen Lord’s life in the Spirit, he gives to us: “*Receive the Holy Spirit*” (Jn.20:21). It is a life that can overcome sin and brings forgiveness. “*Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven*” (Jn.20:23). It means being forgiven and forgiving others (Lord’s Prayer).

The Kingdom of God is to be “*on earth as it is in heaven*,” life in the Spirit. Strive to do the will of God, even when the Spirit leads you into the testing of your commitment to the Lord. Temptation can be the test of love.

**Scripture:** Meditate on the Gospel today and Jesus breathing down the Holy Spirit.

**Liturgy:** “*Today you sent the Holy Spirit on those marked out to be your Church*” (Pre-face of Eucharistic Prayer for Pentecost). The Byzantine Liturgy says “*we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith*” (Troparion, prayer after communion).

**Teaching:** “On that day (Pentecost), the Holy Trinity is fully revealed..and we share in the communion of the Holy Trinity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church. CCC.732).

**Witness:** *What can we do for a life in the Spirit and be witnesses?*



### **FOR THE CHILDREN**

***What happened at Pentecost?*** See First Reading Acts 2:1-11. (Scripture)

***Which sacraments, amongst others are specially seen as receiving the Holy Spirit?*** Baptism and Confirmation. (Liturgy)

***Who is the Holy Spirit?*** The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. (*Old Penny Catechism*) (Doctrine)

When Jesus gave the Holy Spirit he told us to forgive (Jn.20:23). ***Who are you going to forgive?*** (Witness)

### **FOR TEENAGERS** (*Shared Christian Praxis*)

***What are your thoughts and feelings about the Holy Spirit?***

***Have you had any experience or seen others experience the Holy Spirit?***

Discuss the Church's experience of the Holy Spirit, in Acts 2:11 and in sacraments.

***How would you compare the Church's experience to what you have seen and felt?***

The Kingdom of God is life in the Spirit. Make decisions on how to work with the Risen Lord.

### **RCIA**

Easter is a climax of our spiritual journey. Our walk continues with the Risen Lord as we enter the great mysteries of faith. The Ascension finalizes the resurrection where Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty and together they send the Holy Spirit. With Pentecost we see the same Spirit that came into the womb of Mary to incarnate Christ, the Spirit that raised Him up from the dead, the same Spirit that came down upon the early Church, with us today for the building of the Kingdom, the renewal of our lives and "renewing the face of the earth" (Ps. 103:30).

### **LIFE EXPERIENCE**

I had lost my patience and shouted at the alcoholic. His reaction was that it is not the real me talking but something else. Was it his way of Dante saying: "*Fatti non foste viver come bruti ma per seguir virtute e conoscenza*" (i) i.e. 'you are not born to be a brute but to follow virtue and understanding'?

As '*Imago Dei*,' we were made for Eden, like the first human who walked with God in the gentle breeze, *Ruah*, Spirit, in Eden (Gen.3:8). Pentecost now recaptures us into a new full life in the Spirit.

(i) DANTE Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy*. Vol.I *Inferno*. Canto xxvi: 119,120.

## LITTLE ANGELINA

"I did not call the Holy Ghost a spook," I said.

"You did," said Angelina, with a determination to defend the holy name.

She was referring to the discussion I had with her elders with regards to the universality of the liturgical response: "And with your spirit." It doesn't ring in Japan because there is no proper word for 'spirit.' The closest Japanese translation would be a 'ghost' (of a dead person). It would be like saying to a living person "And with your spook."

Angelina thought I was mocking the Holy Ghost. My first reaction was to tell her to listen properly or to keep out of grown-ups' discussions but the child needs to grow. I had to explain how I understand and believe in the Holy Spirit, as third person of the Blessed Trinity, and how I pray, not as to a spook but to the living God and how we pray at the altar "**that we may be filled with the Holy Spirit and become one body, one spirit in Christ**" (*Eucharistic Prayer III*).

Children need explanations as they grow. The shepherd has to feed the lambs as well as the sheep. He has to help them grow in knowledge, wisdom and grace, as did Jesus as a growing child (*Lk.2:52*) and was quite capable of discussion in the Temple (*Lk.2:46*). Such is dialogue, even with God, a dialectic of the Holy Spirit in the Church, from early days.

**IMPORTANT WORD:** השבועות (*Hashavu'oth*), Πεντηκοστή, **Pentecoste**, **Pentecost**

**Hag Hashavu'oth** meaning **Feast of Pentecost** is a Jewish feast, fifty days after the Passover, also known as the 'Feast of Weeks' (*Deut.16:16*), a festival of thanksgiving for the harvest. For Christians it is the time when the Holy Spirit came down on the apostles, fifty days after the Resurrection. It is a moment when there was a gathering of many nations in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks. For the Church, it was a worldwide harvest, a Catholic beginning, spelling the salvation for all in Jesus Christ, "the immensity of divine love," exclaims Bob Bobrinsky in his book, 'The Mystery of the Trinity.'

(i) **BOBRINSKY** Bob. *The Mystery of the Trinity*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, N.Y. 1999. p.16

**Watchword:** "**Receive the Holy Spirit**" (*Jn.20:22*).

Hebrew: קחו לכם את־רוח הקדש  
*Qehu lakhem 'eth-Ruah haQodesh.*

Greek: λαβετε πνευμα αγιον.  
*Labete Pneuma hagioy.*

Latin: **Accipite Spiritum sanctum.**

Portuguese: **Recebei o Espirito Santo.**

Spanish: **Recibid el Espiritu Santo.**

French: **Recevez le Saint-Esprit!**

German: **Nehmt hin den Heiligen Geist!**

Afrikaans: **Ontvang die Heilige Gees!**

Zulu: **Yamukelani uMoya Ocwebileyo.**

Xhosa: **Yamkelani uMoya oyiNgcwele.**

Sotho: **Amohelang Moya o Halalelang.**

Irish: **Glacaiqi an Spiorad Naomh.**

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## CATECHETICS

Lesson 25:

## “CHANGE” AND MODERN CATECHETICS

**Change** is an important concept for an understanding of catechetics. It helps one to appreciate why there are **developments** in its history and especially in this twentieth century. It identifies here with the idea of “process” and “**growth**”. Think of the growth of a mustard seed and how it becomes a shrub. Our faith grows too and our experiences and understanding of it grows as well. It involves a change and development of our Christian attitudes and appreciation of the truths of faith and realities of life. Catechetics involves not only one’s personal growth in faith but also the sharing of it with others and how that happens can also change.

The Christian faith is not just a faith to be known but also a faith to be lived. It is not just intellectual but also voluntary, a challenge to commitment. Ultimately it is not simply a faith of the mind but a faith of the **heart**, spelt out more directly in the language of **love**. It is a relationship between God and the human person and also neighbour. The script is there in the depths of every human heart, to be love and be loved. This the aim of catechesis, to show that it climaxes and perfected in Jesus, true unconditional love. He is the **Christ**, the promised one, the fulfilment of our deepest yearnings, the ultimate truth of our lives, live in its most human and divine form. God has loved us into existence and continues to love us into eternal life. We live, not to be forgotten but remembered with an everlasting love. We are born, not to die but to live forever. If catechesis in all its growth and development is not at this level of teaching then it falls short of its ultimate goal, for this the true proclamation, the **Kerygma** – Christ is alive here and now in our life situations and lovingly beckons us to salvation, a call to be **transfigured** like Himself and be the glory of God, a person fully alive.

‘**Change**’ in catechetics then involves **transformations**. It is transformation of the catechist, the catechumens or pupils and of catechetics (methods of instructions). Changes in catechetics does not necessarily mean change of the catechesis (content). Catechesis, to be authentic, has to be true to its roots which is the apostolic teachings of the Church based on the Kerygma. What is of special interest here is the change or developments in catechetics, **new approaches** to teaching. This twentieth century of ours has witnessed some remarkable developments in this field.

Changes have occurred because of a development in the **understanding** of certain basic elements in catechetics, such as God’s **message, communication** and **human experience**. Researches on the Bible, the nature of **divine revelation** and life situations have played a major role. These elements will be studied more deeply in the course of these lectures and should enable one to appreciate the changes in ways of catechizing and the need for **updating** catechisms.

1. Can you give some examples of change, (a) in your life, (b) in the world around you and (c) in the Church?  
What is your opinion of these changes?
2. Have you ever experienced any change in your understanding of the Bible?
3. Have had any experiences in your life that has affected your faith?
4. What is your understanding of revelation? Can you describe it?
5. If you see the importance of change in catechetics with regards to the Bible and life experiences, what could you do to exploit that in the deepening of your faith and how you share it with others?