

From Babbling to Fluency

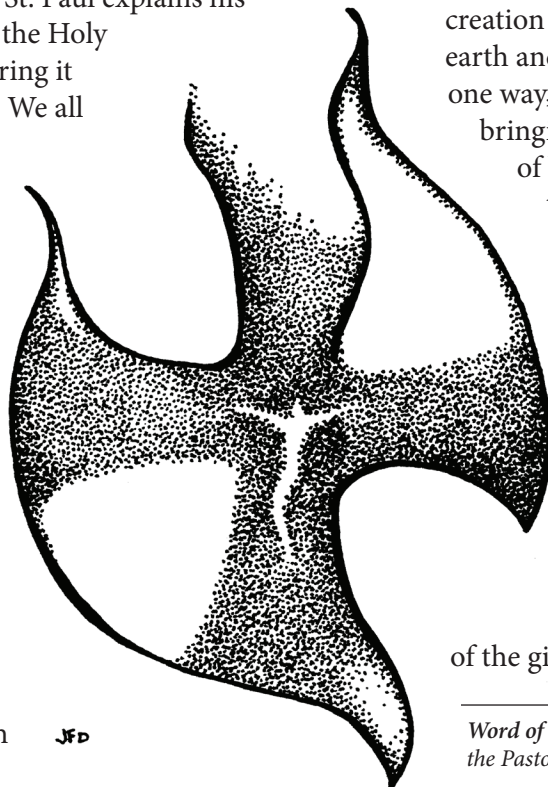
This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Acts 2:1-11 - Descent of the Holy Spirit
- ▶ 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 - Many gifts, one Spirit
- ▶ John 20:19-23 - Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples

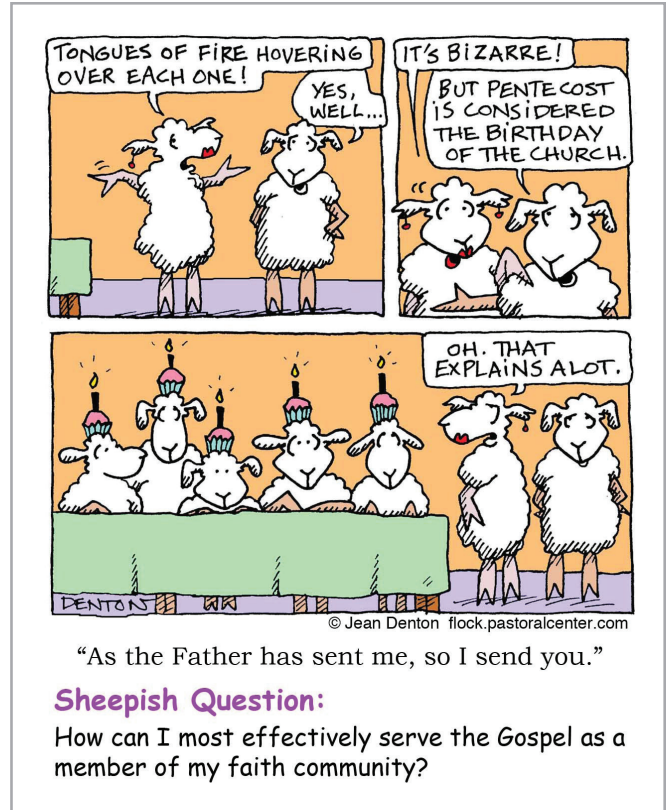


In the first reading today, Luke tells us that the Spirit came upon the disciples dramatically and gave them the gift of tongues—the ability to communicate with foreign visitors who were from all over the known world. It is a scene that is almost an exact reversal of the story of the Tower of Babel found in Genesis. In that story, everyone in the whole world spoke the same language. In their selfish pride, they came together to build a city and a tower to reach to heaven to “make a name for ourselves.” God humbled them by confusing their language so they could no longer understand one another. Their speaking sounded like nothing more than “babbling,” and for that reason, their city became known as Babel. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the scattering of people and confusion of languages is overcome by the Spirit so that everyone can hear and understand “the mighty acts of God.”

In the second reading, St. Paul explains his understanding of how the Holy Spirit works by comparing it to our physical bodies. We all understand that our different body parts have different functions and that all are needed for our health and well-being. St. Paul taught that the Holy Spirit can be understood to work among us in the same way. As individuals, we have all been given certain spiritual gifts that the world needs and which



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“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Sheepish Question:
How can I most effectively serve the Gospel as a member of my faith community?

can benefit everyone. The source of all those different gifts is the one Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel reading, we hear John’s account of how Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his disciples: he breathed on them. That image would have reminded them, and their fellow Jews, of the story of creation when God made Adam out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him, bringing him to life. In one way, when Jesus breathed on the disciples, he was bringing them to life in a new way. Now, instead of being huddled behind locked doors because they were afraid, they are given the courage and strength to go out and spread the Good News with all those who hadn’t yet heard of Jesus and his message of love.

Questions of the Week

- 1 What are some gifts you feel you have been given in order to serve the world?
- 2 In what area(s) of your life right now do you feel the need of the gifts of the Holy Spirit?