

## **PENTECOST**

The readings insist that gifts and talents come to us from the Spirit, and by definition, are the property of the community. They promote the common good. Through these gifts, the spirit forms community. Pentecost signals the start of the universal mission of the Church with the Spirit as its driving force.

In the first reading, the fire (tongues of) and the sound (rush of wind) recall the covenant on Mt. Sinai. "Devout Jews from many nations" hearkens back to the tower of Babel, but at Pentecost the result is unity and not confusion.

In the second reading, Paul's Corinth was a community of rugged individualists. The gifts of the Spirit were flaunted as personal endowments. In diversity, Paul stresses unity. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." Since all were baptized into one body, they become members and received the same Spirit. The conclusion is that rivalry is wrong since all flows from the same Spirit and is to be used for the good of all.

In the Gospel, Jesus breathes upon them, a gesture reminiscent of Genesis and thus suggests a new creation. Reception of the Spirit empowers the disciples to forgive sins. Peace is the supreme gift of the risen Jesus. This harmony and peace is the precise opposite of sin, which implies self-isolation and withdrawal from the communion with God and fellow humans. The sending forth of the apostles is to share the gift of Jesus' peace with the entire world. By bestowing the Spirit, Jesus supplies the Christian community with the source of power to accomplish the mission.