



Impact

Discipleship. Stewardship. Evangelization.

June, 2017 In this month of June, we celebrate Pentecost, focus on the mystery of the Trinity, and reflect deeply on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. In Impact this month, we take time to ponder the presence of the Holy Spirit with and within us. We hope that you and all in your parish will be enliven in faith, and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen you to live as disciples who share their gifts and faith for lasting impact in our world.

— Leisa Anslinger and Amberly Boerschinger

Homily Connections

June 4: On Pentecost Sunday, we hear of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those who were gathered in the upper room. They are immediately emboldened to witness to Jesus Christ, and through them a large crowd hears the Good News. In the gospel, Jesus breathes on the disciples, imparting the Holy Spirit and offering them peace.

Connecting with everyday life: Through Baptism and Confirmation, we have received the Holy Spirit. How often are we truly attentive to the Spirit's presence? Do we recognize the Spirit's gifts and inspiration? Do we call upon the Spirit to enflame our hearts and make us bold in living our faith? We may not be from dozens of foreign countries, but we are young and old; we represent many different cultures and life experiences; we have many cares, hopes, and dreams. The Holy Spirit fills us with all we need to be strengthened in faith and to live as people of faith in our daily lives. Remind your people of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Invite them to think of one specific situation in which one or more of the gifts would make an impact on the way they live their lives. Share an experience of this in your own life.

June 11: Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Each of the readings today provide a particular way of recognizing God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. While the Trinity is a great mystery than none can fully comprehend, it is good for us to take time to reflect on the triune God who is alive and active in the lives of people and in the life of the Church.

Connecting with everyday life: It is important that people are attentive to the ways in which God is alive and active in their lives — our faith may sometimes feel abstract and distant to many, especially on a day such as this, in which we focus on a complex mystery of faith. Bring the Trinity to life by inviting your people to think of a time in which they have experienced God's love in some simple or profound way. Recognizing God in the beauty of creation may be an apt way to recognize God as Father and Creator; experiencing the forgiveness or strong love and friendship with another may help us to know Jesus as our Savior, brother, and friend; knowing peace or coming to a sense of understanding a time of confusion or turmoil is a way of experiencing the presence of the Holy Spirit.

June 18: On this Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, we reflect deeply on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. This sacred mystery and gift is a special treasure for us as Catholics. Jesus is the living bread; through the celebration of the Eucharist, we are drawn into Christ's presence, nourished in word and sacrament, and sent to live as the Body of Christ in the circumstances of our daily lives.

Connecting with everyday life: Take time to recall a moment in which you have been struck by the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. Share this with your people. Invite them to think of all that would be lacking in their lives without this sacred gift. Then, ask them to consider how they will live differently as a result of their presence at Mass this week, and each week. How will they be and share the Body of Christ at home, work or school, in the parish and the world?

June 25: The gospel on this Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time invites us to take all we have experienced during Lent, Easter, and Pentecost and to live it as witnesses of God's love.

Connecting with everyday life: What darkness do we experience in our lives? Personal experiences of darkness may come to mind for some. For others, the darkness of violence, natural disaster, or political division might weigh heavily. Our natural response to such challenges is to become afraid, and yet, as people of faith, we know that God is with us through it all. It is in the dark times that we most need to rely on God's providence and to witness to the light for others. Invite your people to reflect on the darkness they perceive and to rely on the love of God to weather the storms. Ask them to consider how they might share the light of Christ for others.

At Parish Meetings or in Adult Faith Formation this Month

Opening Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Enkindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, by the light of the Holy Spirit, you have taught the hearts of the faithful. In that same Spirit, help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Listen to Sacred Scripture: Acts 2:1-11

Read: "Filled with the presence of God" in the June Impact.

Share: your thoughts, using these questions to guide your reflection:

In what ways do you perceive the presence of the Holy Spirit?

What difference does the Spirit make in your life?

Commit: Use Impact this Month to guide your reflection on the Holy Spirit. Make a commitment to take time to be attentive and responsive to the Spirit's presence.

Offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Filled with the presence of God

Picture in your mind your favorite painting or photograph. Hear the familiar sounds of the recording you most enjoy. Think of your favorite movie, the background of its setting, the soundtrack, lighting and costumes.

In each, what is not seen or heard is essential to our experience of that which is central. A painting, without the color or light in the background would have no clear image upon which to gaze; music without the pauses, an endless stream of noise; a movie without the background falls flat, and does not capture our attention. **This could be one way of thinking about the Holy Spirit in our lives.** People sometimes say they have a difficult time perceiving the Holy Spirit, and yet, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us is like the background in a painting that allows the image to shine through: as people created in God's image and likeness, it is the power of the Holy Spirit that infuses us with the gifts, guidance, wisdom, and courage to live as Christian disciples and stewards. We often only recognize the Spirit's presence in hindsight, much as we only recognize the background in the movie as we reflect on it over time.

Once we draw our attention to the unseen and yet holy within and around us, we recognize the Spirit's action in our minds and hearts, and we perceive the presence of God in others. We see the eyes of Christ in the eyes of the poor and the lonely; we hear the voice of the Lord in the call of a child or an elder; and we become ready to witness to the love of God in the course of our daily lives. We share our presence, gifts, and resources as stewards through the power of the Holy Spirit, grateful people whose lives are filled with the presence of God.

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

We begin and end prayer with the Sign of the Cross, but have you ever thought of the sign itself as a prayer? The Sign of the Cross invites us into an encounter with God's love, protection, mercy, forgiveness and presence. Through this briefest of prayers, we recall the key mysteries of our faith: that we are created in love and for love by God the Father; we are redeemed through Jesus Christ, whose passion, death, and resurrection lead us to the fullness of life; and we are filled with the Holy Spirit, whose presence empowers us to live as God desires. These three persons are one God, whose love is overflowing, everlasting, abundant beyond our comprehension. The Sign of the Cross is a sign of our faith, whether prayed privately in personal prayer or publicly, before meals, at Mass, with friends. The next time you make the Sign of the Cross, make a renewed commitment to live as a child of God, disciple of Jesus Christ, as one who is anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit.

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Impact this month

Take time each day this month to become attentive and responsive to the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Breathe: Reflect on the assurance of the Spirit's presence within you.

With each breath, invite God to fill you with life, goodness, strength, and wisdom.

Reflect: Look back at the day or week that has just passed. In what ways was God with you, in the celebration of Mass or Reconciliation, through an unmistakable sense of peace, the love or care of others, the beauty of life and nature, an unexpected blessing?

Live: Assured of God's presence and filled with the Holy Spirit, discern how you will witness to the great love and mercy of God by sharing love and mercy with others.

Share: Attentive to the presence and working of the Holy Spirit in your life, share with others.

#SpiritMoment

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Don't wait to open these gifts!

Have you ever anxiously awaited a special occasion in which you knew you would be given gifts? Perhaps you have seen the packages, wrapped with bows, ready for you to receive them. Imagine opening your gifts on that special day, and then simply setting the gifts aside.

For many, this is what has happened to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were poured out upon us at Confirmation. We have received the gifts, yet they remain unused and under-appreciated. Some of us may not even remember what the gifts are, and yet, they are with us always. We could say these are gifts that really do "keep on giving."

Wisdom. Understanding. Right Judgment. Courage. Knowledge. Reverence. Wonder and Awe. Who doesn't need these gifts in our lives? Think of the impact the gifts could have in time with family and friends, in sticky situations at work, the difference these gifts could make in our world! We may not always be aware of it, but the Holy Spirit is with and within us. Please don't wait to open these gifts!

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