

Foundations of Faith (A Catechism for Today)

Lesson 21 – May 21

Question 59: What is the significance of Pentecost?

Beginning with Pentecost, God's Spirit came to dwell with the church in a new and everpresent way. All Christians share in the Spirit, "being baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). By the Holy Spirit, Christ's Church comes alive, is sustained, and guided. And the Spirit also works freely in the world bringing goodness and justice.

1 Cor 12:13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Eph 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling.

1 Thess 1:5 Because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit with full conviction.

Acts 9:31 Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Jn 7:39 (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

Acts 4:8, 6:10, 8:29, 10:19, 13:2-4, 15:28

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers and elders of our people,

10 N 29 The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."

one of them could stand against the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke.

19 Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Three men have come looking for you.

2 One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

3 So after more fasting and prayer, the men laid their hands on them and sent them on their way. 4 So Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went down to the seaport of Seleucia and then sailed for the island of Cyprus.

28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay no greater burden on you than these few requirements:

1 Cor 3:16, 12:1-31

16 Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2 You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3 So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. 4

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice ; to another the same Spirit gives a

message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. 28 Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. 29 Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? 30 Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! 31 So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

Gal 3:3-5

3 How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? 4 Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it? 5 I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ.

Question 60: What does the Holy Spirit give to the Church?

A variety of gifts is given to individuals in the Church. These gifts fall into three main groups: those concerned with preaching and teaching, those concerned with service, and those concerned with leadership (1 Corinthians 12:28). Each Christian has his or her own gift and is called to exercise it in the service of Christ.

1 Cor 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

1 Cor 7:7 But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.

1 Pet 4:10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

1 Cor 12:1-31

1 Now, dear brothers and sisters, regarding your question about the special abilities the Spirit gives us. I don't want you to misunderstand this. 2 You know that when you were still pagans, you were led astray and swept along in worshiping speechless idols. 3 So I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God will curse Jesus, and no one can say Jesus is Lord, except by the Holy Spirit. 4 There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. 5 There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. 6 God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. 7 A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. 8 To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice ; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge. 9 The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. 10 He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. 11 It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have. 12 The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. 13 Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. 14 Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. 15 If the foot says, "I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye," would that make it any less a part of the body? 17 If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? 18 But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you." 22 In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. 23 And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, 24 while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. 25 This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. 26 If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. 27 All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it. 28 Here are some of the parts God has appointed for the church: first are apostles, second are prophets, third are teachers, then those who do miracles, those who have the gift of healing, those who can help others, those who have the gift of leadership, those who speak in unknown languages. 29 Are we all apostles? Are we all prophets? Are we all teachers? Do we all have the power to do miracles? 30 Do we all have the gift of healing? Do we all have the ability to speak in unknown languages? Do we all have the ability to interpret unknown languages? Of course not! 31 So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.

Rom 12:4-8

4 Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, 5 so it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. 6 In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, speak out with as much faith as God has given you. 7 If your gift is serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, teach well. 8 If your gift is to encourage others, be encouraging. If it is giving, give generously.

If God has given you leadership ability, take the responsibility seriously. And if you have a gift for showing kindness to others, do it gladly.

Eph 4:7-16

7 However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. 8 That is why the Scriptures say, "When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people." 9 Notice that it says "he ascended." This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. 10 And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself. 11 Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. 13 This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. 14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. 16 He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

Question 61: How should we regard the gift of speaking with tongues and of healing?

Scripture regards them as gifts of the Spirit and gives instruction for their exercise. The Apostle Paul counselled that their public use be orderly. What is important is that these gifts witness to Jesus Christ, build up the Christian community, and be motivated by and received with love and understanding.

1 Cor 12:8-10 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

1 Cor 14:39-40 So my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; but all things should be done decently and in order.

1 Thess 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

Mk 9:29, 16:17

29 Jesus replied, "This kind can be cast out only by prayer. "

17 These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages.

Acts 2:4, 10:46, 19:6

4 And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

46 For they heard them speaking in other tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked,

6 Then when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.

Jas 5:14-16

14 Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. 16 Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

Question 62: How can we tell when the Holy Spirit is present?

The evidence for the presence of the Holy Spirit is seen not only in the spectacular and the unusual but also in what the Bible calls “the fruit of the Spirit”: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22- 23).

Acts 19:6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

1 Cor 14:18-19 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

1 Cor 12:31 So you should earnestly desire the most helpful gifts. But now let me show you a way of life that is best of all.