

**COMMENTARY ON READINGS FOR SUNDAY,
May 30, 2004 (Pentecost Sunday)**

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God's holy Spirit was active in creation, Gen 1:1-2, Jdt 16:14, and renews the earth, Psa 104:30. The Holy Spirit was present in the Exodus, Isa 63:10-11, and in the desert journey, Num 11:16-30, and Moses' desire that everyone would have the Spirit became an eschatological hope of Israel, a manifestation of God's salvation awaited for the End Time, Joel 3:1-5. This Spirit is what Jesus gave us with his death and resurrection, as predicted by John the Baptist, Luke 3:16. Jesus had the Spirit from his baptism, Luke 4:1, 18; Acts 10:38, and promises it to his disciples after his resurrection, Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5. This is what occurs in Pentecost, the Jewish feast which took place fifty days after Passover; it really is the culmination of Passover. For the Jews, it commemorated arrival in the Promised Land (Deut 26:1-11) and celebrated the renewal of the Sinai covenant. For Christians, it was the fulfillment of Israel's hopes: in Acts 2:17 Luke adds "in the last days" to the above citation from Joel. The time has arrived when everyone can know the true God, call upon him and be saved (see Isa 11:1-9; Jer 31:31-34). This is due to Jesus' sacrifice of the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). As in the first covenant at Sinai, which was ratified with blood, Exod 24:8, so on Pentecost there were similar cosmic portents, great noise and fire, as in Exod 19:16-19. But now everyone could understand each other, reversing the confusion of languages ("tongues") which took place in Babel, Gen 11:1-0.

The psalm is the creation psalm mentioned above. The alternative readings from Paul speak of the Spirit as the God-given source of our gifts for the service and upbuilding of the Church community; it is the same Spirit which gives life (Ezek 37:1-14), which raised Jesus from the dead (Rom 1:4), which will give life to our own bodies of sin and death, raising us up to a new life in Christ Jesus. Note that in John's gospel the Spirit is bestowed from the moment of Jesus' death, 19:30.