



## Lectio Divina. Pentecost Sunday. Year B

*Guadalupe Province (Mexico), Sr. María de los Ángeles Flores Pérez, 23rd of May 2021.- In Him and with Him.*

### GOSPEL

#### John 20: 19-23.

<sup>19</sup>In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them.

<sup>20</sup>He said to them: “*Peace be with you*”.

And after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seen the Lord,

<sup>21</sup>and he said to them again: “*Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.*”

<sup>22</sup>After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone’s sins, they are retained*”.

### STUDY OF THE TEXT<sup>1</sup>

The verses 19-23 contain the main elements of the Lord's treatment with his disciples after the Resurrection. He appears before them so that they may know who he is, and they rejoice at his presence and his triumph over death (vv 19-20). Sends them to continue the mission that the Father gave Him (v 21). Fulfills the promise to send them the Holy Spirit and give it to them. (v 22). Authorizes them to declare forgiveness and guilt when making known his saving grace (v 23). These various elements are fixed in five phrases. The different traditions of the apparitions that would have circulated independently, together with vv 19-20 provide a remarkably comprehensive summary of the instructions and actions of the risen Lord. With them the story of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel reaches a

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<sup>1</sup> LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, Homiletical exegetical study Jn 29: 19-31, Buenos Aires 2017.

genuine conclusion. The Evangelist states that the apparitions to the disciples took place that afternoon. They don't connect it with the situation of the morning events.

## MEDITATION

*"At sunset"* ... It is fascinating to note that the text says 'sunset' and not 'beginning of darkness', or 'starting the night'. It is not that the light begins to fail, despite the darkness in which their hearts sink, but the threshold of full Light, said with an expression that implies recollection, intimacy, reflection. To prepare the soul, alerts the senses.

*"That day"* ... that same day, that beloved day. As if John were caressing a reality: the first day of the whole human history.

*"Closed the doors"* ... The doors were closed by limitation, by fear, by cowardice, because it takes time to enter oneself (cf. Lk 15:17) and He knew it. Fortunately, the Gospel does not say that the house was closed (House: home, lineage, family, intimacy, authorship, mentality). However, they closed the doors because they wanted to protect themselves; there was confusion in the community about who was who, even among them; They knew that one of them gave up the Master. Was he really a follower? Did he cease to be a follower because of disagreements? Or was he never a disciple? The mistrust can be so painful that, you can even close the house. Blessed be God, his mercy is going to manifest itself before reaching this state of the soul in which not only the doors are closed, but rather that the house is closed. It was a climate of sadness, of confusion, of not knowing, the temptation of nonsense.

*"Jesus appeared"* ... Jesus, Rabbuni, beloved Master, desired Master, Master betrayed. The heart flutters, the breath stops, hope awakes shyly.

And in that closeness and unthinkable intimacy: *"the disciples were glad to see the Lord"* ... they experience an ineffable joy that no one can take away from them (Cf. Jn 16:22), a joy that endures and grows stronger to this day.

*"Jesus said to them again: Peace be with you"* ... Jesus The Lord, as God, fulfills his Promise, delivers the promised peace because he has conquered the world (cf. Jn 16:33). They saw him and believed that it is true that God loves them, that Jesus lives and is capable of intervene mysteriously. That he did not abandon them, that he brought good out of evil with his power, with his infinite creativity and foolproof love.

“As the Father sent me, so I send you” ...<sup>2</sup> Where are you sending them Lord? What is it that You, and the Father, have seen? Lord, you let yourself be filled with tenderness and compassion before the sincere disposition of your apostles to go and preach on your name.

“Having said that, he blew on them” ... Whisper of a soft breeze that penetrates intimacy, as in the cave of Elijah (1Ki 19, 12), revealing the infinite abundance of this Gift. “It was a Torrent<sup>3</sup> which I could not cross; the stream had swollen and was now deep water. And when I came back, I saw that on the bank of the river there was a great quantity of trees, on both sides. Wherever the torrent passes, every living being teeming in it will live. On the banks of the Torrente, on either side, will grow all kinds of fruit trees whose foliage will not wither and whose fruits will not fail: they will produce every month new fruits, because this Water comes from the Sanctuary” (Ez 47,5.7.9a.12).

And by the pure mercy of God, he entered even their most intimate intimacy, penetrated them, took possession of them<sup>4</sup> and they were like the bush that burns without being consumed (cf. Ex 3, 2); blew it on them and from then on it was possible burning fire and warmth in the heart; dynamism and rest; momentum and caress; missionary ardor and mysticism; parrhesia and prudence; preaching and intimacy. He blew on them delivering *a thin voice of silence*.<sup>5</sup>

“And he said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit” ... Where the Father and Jesus are, there is also the Holy Spirit. It is He who is behind, it is He who prepared and opened their hearts to receive the announcement of salvation, it is He who will keep alive that experience of salvation, it is He who helped them grow in unspeakable joy. The Holy Spirit fills the heart of the risen Christ and from there it poured into his life like a spring. And When they received it, the Holy Spirit made them enter more and more into the heart of Christ, their Master, so that more and more, they would be filled with his love, his light and his force. From this day on the apostles invoked the Holy Spirit every day, and He renewed in them constantly the experience of the big announcement.

## TODAY

We are sent to revitalize the mission with the power of the Holy Spirit, “we advance animated by this Gift of the Risen Lord that impels us to a profound spiritual renewal that

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<sup>2</sup> Let me take inspiration, in addition to this Word, from a Russian icon, I think we all know it and know something about it: Andrei Rublëv's Trinity of 1411.

<sup>3</sup> I have capitalized the word Torrente, because it is the Gift of God, which is God Himself. Likewise, the Words Water and Sanctuary.

<sup>4</sup> For they had already opened their door and their houses.

<sup>5</sup> Some biblical scholars express that it is the best translation of 1Ki 19, 12b: “After the earthquake, fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. After the fire, a fine voice of silence”.

gives greater meaning and strength to our life, lead us to recreate in fraternal community the following of the Master and to transcend borders with audacity and creativity”<sup>6</sup>

The Word of God reflected here is an invitation to praise and thank God for the charism received from the Holy Spirit. Marie Poussepin charism roots us in the contemplation of the Word and reality with a look of mercy. The pericope has expressed to us with unprecedented clarity and force the need to remain in contemplation to arrange our house and allow Him to enter our privacy more intimately, to penetrate us, to take possession of our whole being until it burns like the bush. We pray to the Risen One that we always breathe his Breath and that, in us, his life-giving action, which is burning fire and warmth in the heart, be a reality; dynamism and rest; momentum and caress; missionary ardor and mysticism and prudence; preaching and intimacy.

Here we are, Lord, ready to receive your *soft voice of silence*.

With the power of the Spirit, we will be able to resignify our consecrated life according to the charism of Marie Poussepin, to be a legible sign of the God who inhabit us.

## CONTEMPLATION

1. Contemplating the icon of Rublev <sup>7</sup>
2. Express your thanksgiving for the Gift of the Spirit in your personal life, in the Congregation, in the Church, in the humanity of good will.

## PRAYER

**Oh God, you have enlightened the hearts of your children with the light of the Holy Spirit; make us docile to his inspirations to always taste the good and enjoy His consolation. For Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Chapter Document 2019, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> The icon is made with an inverted perspective, that is, it does not have a focus from which to contemplate it, on the contrary, we are contemplated by the Holy Trinity who invites us to communion, to sit at his table. Luminosity, delicacy, sweetness, balance, beauty. The faces are melancholic, sad, they see a complex situation, they see the situation of those who contemplate the icon. In 15th century Russia there was a time of cruelty and great pain. The icon presents us with a great response to the situation of human suffering, showing inner freedom. To unite preaching and a life of holiness, we must see the Risen One, follow the inspiration of the Spirit that has been given to us, beauty, harmony, reverence for the Father, one with the Son, a whisper of gentle wind, more present in me than myself. The icon helps us to orient the problem of human suffering in the right direction, looking at the faces of the three: horizon of infinite love, beyond the terrible suffering that one lives. Faced with a world of discord: harmony. Faced with horror and meaningless: beauty and serenity that comes from the love that unites them.

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