

FOR THE WEEKEND OF MAY 23-24, 2026

Pentecost Sunday

Gospel Reading

Jn 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

[Jesus] said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit.

Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Intercession

That through the power of the Holy Spirit and support of the **Annual Appeal**, we may bring his peace and mercy to those in need.

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Forgiveness is central to our Christian identity, as this Sunday’s Gospel illustrates. The disciples were supposed to be Jesus’ closest friends. But humans are flawed, and as such they failed him miserably. In fear, all but one abandoned Jesus when he was condemned, brutalized, and crucified. One even went as far as denying—three times—that he even knew Jesus, let alone was his follower. And yet, the first thing Jesus says to them is “Peace be with you.” No words of recrimination for their weakness. No expression of sorrow at their betrayal. No word at all about their failings. Just unconditional love and forgiveness, words of peace.

As Christians, our sins are forgiven in Christ’s name. We are also called to be instruments of forgiveness ourselves. Forgiving those who have hurt us doesn’t mean we excuse their poor behavior or allow ourselves to be taken advantage of. Nor does it mean we condone the wrong. It means we, like Christ, don’t hold their failings against them. We extend to all the same love that Christ offers us. We can help extend Christ’s message of peace and forgiveness through ministries that heal, reconcile, and bring hope to those most in need by supporting the **Annual Appeal**. Please consider making a gift today.

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Fear is a great inhibitor. The disciples are hiding behind locked doors, paralyzed by fear and uncertainty. Jesus enters this fear. Twice He says, “Peace be with you,” grounding his greeting in calm assurance. He then gives them a charge: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Jesus doesn’t let his disciples stay behind locked doors. He calls them out into the world, to share the Good News, to forgive, to serve. He breathes on them the Holy Spirit, equipping them with the power and courage to fulfill their mission. The Church is thus born from belief coupled with action.

This same Spirit is given to us. We, too, are called to be Christ’s presence in our homes, workplaces, and communities. That mission may be daunting, especially in a world that often resists faith, but we do not go alone. Jesus is with us. His Spirit strengthens us. And we walk together as a Church. One way we answer this call is by supporting the **Annual Appeal**, which sustains the Church’s mission through ministries of education, service, and outreach. Your gift helps send the Church into the world, just as Christ sent his first disciples.

Social Media Post/Content

Photo: Dove in flight with setting sun behind

Header: “Peace be with you.” – John 20: 19

Copy: Morning prayer time makes for the best day ever! Through prayer and support of the **Annual Appeal**, we can bring Christ’s peace to others.