

May 2026

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Having said this, he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’” (Jn. 20:21-22)

On Easter day, the Risen Lord appeared first to Mary Magdalen in the morning and then to his disciples that same evening. When they saw him, they reacted with great joy and were enriched by the true peace that only the Lord could give.ⁱ “Peace be with you” (v. 21). Joy and peace are fruits of the Spirit.ⁱⁱ In fact, Jesus immediately said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” (v. 22).

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The Holy Spirit not only enabled the disciples to carry out the same mission given to Jesus by the Father but also “re-created” them and renewed their humanity. The Risen Lord breathed on them and this gesture is the same as the action of the Creator who breathed into the nostrils of the man formed from the dust of the ground.ⁱⁱⁱ Just as creation is the continuous work of the Father's love that sustains the entire universe, so the new creation wrought by the Risen One through the Holy Spirit continually sustains humanity on its journey toward the Kingdom.

This month's Word of Life reminds us that we have the opportunity to become like Jesus. This is true for each of us individually, but even more so as a community. Jesus spoke to his disciples in the plural. In fact, it's only together that all the different members form the mystical body of Jesus.

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Having been made children in the Son, we have the same vocation as Jesus. We have come from the Father, and will return to him. We are called to repeat his actions and words in the world and are accompanied by the grace of the Holy Spirit. If we open ourselves to this gift, we too can affirm with Paul: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.”^{iv}

This Word, therefore, invites us to deepen our relationship with the Holy Spirit, both in prayer and in everyday life, “listening to that voice” and remembering that, *“Without the Holy Spirit, God is distant, Christ remains in the past, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is a mere organization and its mission is propaganda. But in the Holy Spirit, the cosmos is lifted up and*

groans in the gestation of the Kingdom, the risen Christ is present, the Gospel is the power of life, the Church means Trinitarian communion and Pentecost is its mission.”^v

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Andrea was a teenager in crisis. He had doubts about the meaning of life, fear of the future, the fragility he experienced seemed insurmountable and he often felt discouraged and unhappy. Someone suggested that he talk to Chiara Lubich. Shortly before actually meeting her, Andrea heard Chiara whisper the words “Holy Spirit” and realized that she was praying.

During the conversation, he felt deeply understood and completely accepted. He found peace again not because his problems had suddenly disappeared but because now there was someone with whom he could share them.

Years later, he confided “I not only received concrete help from Chiara but I also learned how to live – that is to be close to those who suffer and to have a sensitive and understanding attitude, without judging - just as Jesus would do.”

Only the Holy Spirit can make this happen, if we welcome him and allow him to work in us.

Prepared by Claudio Cianfaglioni & the Word of Life Team

iCf Jn. 14:27

iiGal. 5:22

iiiCf Gen. 2:7

ivGal. 2:2

vIgnatius, Metropolitan of Laodicea 1968, quoted by Pope Francis in Pentecost homily 31 May 2020