

**First reading Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17**

**‘They laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.’**

In those days: Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

Now when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

**Responsorial Psalm 66(65): 1-7, 16, 20. R1**

**Cry out with joy to God, all the earth.**

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;

O sing to the glory of his name.

O render him glorious praise.

Say to God, ‘How wondrous your deeds!’

‘Before you all the earth shall bow down,  
shall sing to you, sing to your name!’

Come and see the works of God:

his wondrous deeds among the children of Adam.

He turned the sea into dry land;  
they passed through the river on foot.  
Let our joy, then, be in him;  
he rules for ever by his might.

Come and hear, all who fear God;  
I will tell what he did for my soul.  
Blest be God, who did not reject my prayer,  
nor withhold from me his merciful love.

**Second reading 1 Peter 3: 15-18**

**‘Being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.’**

Beloved: In your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.

**Gospel Acclamation John 14:23**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, says the Lord, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him.

**Alleluia.**

**Gospel John 14: 15-21**

**‘I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper.’**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

‘I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.’

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**Feast days this week**

**Tuesday 12th May: St Pancras**

**Wednesday 13th May: Our Lady of Fatima**

**Thursday 14th May: The Ascension of the Lord**

**Friday 15th May: Bl Maria Vergine di Fatima**

**Cycle of Prayer****New Members of the Church****Background**

The Easter Vigil is the usual time to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) with Adults. The Easter Season is therefore the time for post-baptismal catechesis or ‘mystagogy’ with the newly baptised or ‘neophytes’.

“This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the Gospel, sharing in the eucharist, and in doing works of charity.” RCIA 234

In many communities and dioceses the Easter Season is a privileged time to celebrate the Sacraments of First Communion and Baptism.

**Prayer**

*Father,*

*you give your Church  
constant growth  
by adding new members  
to your family.*

*Help us put into action  
in our lives  
the baptism*

*we have received in faith*

*Very soon we will be celebrating two important feasts in the Easter calendar; The Ascension of Jesus and Pentecost. Our readings today draw our attention to this and begin to point us that direction.*

*Initially after the resurrection, the friends and followers of Jesus went into hiding for fear of their lives. They had seen their close friend and Master betrayed, denied, condemned and crucified. They had lost all heart. But eventually they began to find the courage and strength to believe in Jesus and in themselves. Jesus had appeared to them several times to strengthen and encourage them. So they began to go into the streets and villages and proclaim the good news of the resurrection. They began to preach, heal and teach.*

*They did not do any of this by themselves. They were filled with the Spirit of the risen Jesus. When the crowds ask by what power they heal and preach, Peter replies it is faith in the name of Jesus the sick are made better. In the first reading this Sunday from the Acts of the Apostles many people are healed and cured. The followers of Jesus lay their hands on the people and they receive the Holy Spirit.*

*When we were baptised, we too had hands laid on us. We were given a name, we were anointed and we were filled with the gift of the exact same Holy Spirit. This simple but profound ritual was repeated when we celebrated our Confirmation. We were sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*Just as the first followers of Jesus proclaimed and announced the good news of his resurrection, we in our time and in our way are called to do the same. Today, we are the people who are called to be witnesses and messengers of the resurrection. We do this in our homes, our communities and in our workplaces; wherever and however we can. In his letter, The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis said to each of us, 'because of their baptism, all members of the people of God have become missionary disciples....every Christian is challenged here and now, to be actively engaged in proclaiming the good news'.*

*As we prepare to shortly celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, may we recall and remember our own baptism and confirmation. May the Lord help us to realise that we are called not only to believe in his resurrection, but we also to live and proclaim this good news through the quality of our daily lives with each other.*

**Michael Moore OMI**