

# Opening Reflections for Committees: June 2018

Witness and Fellowship Ministry Team

## Pentecost

The day of Pentecost is often seen as the Holy Spirit's big day – and we can want to focus on the lights and flames, the different tongues and rushing wind – but that sort of misses the point. When Peter preaches, he basically brushes off the “miracle” of the day. Instead, Peter preaches Christ and Him Crucified for forgiveness. He preaches baptism for the remission of sin, and with this baptism you will “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

And what in particular does this gift of the Holy Spirit bring? It is what Jesus promises in John 14:27. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” This is the job of the Holy Spirit, to bring the Peace of God to sinners. This is a real gift for real sinners.

Do you find yourself trapped in your sin, daily struggling with issues and angers and emotions that are seemingly beyond your control? Do you daily end up doing things you know you shouldn't, saying unkind words, thinking unkind thoughts, wounding friends and family, spreading gossip, being short with each other, despising others? Well, the wonderful thing is this: the Holy Spirit works through the Word even in English to folks today proclaims again the great message: Peace be with you! Your sin, your warfare and rebellion against God, is forgiven, for Christ Jesus has died upon the Cross and has risen again, and He has declared His peace. Right now you are at peace with God.

And this peace that Jesus gives through His Spirit, He doesn't give it as the world does. There are no strings attached. There are no hoops for you to jump through, no veiled threats included. Jesus has declared you forgiven, and you are. You have no need of being troubled, no need of being afraid of either God's wrath nor the wrath of men. This is the twofold message that is proclaimed in the Church and has been since **Pentecost** – that we are sinners in need of forgiveness and that God gives us that forgiveness, truly gives us freely and completely that forgiveness, on account of Christ Jesus. Therefore we have true peace, peace in Christ.

**Prayer:** O God, send forth your Holy Spirit into my heart that I may perceive, into my mind that I may remember, and into my soul that I may meditate. Inspire me to speak with piety, holiness, tenderness and mercy. Teach, guide and direct my thoughts and senses from beginning to end. May your grace ever help and correct me, and may I be strengthened now with wisdom from on high, for the sake of your infinite mercy. Amen.