

## From The Pastor

Today is the feast of the Ascension of Our Lord into heaven. It signals forty days after Easter and points to the feast Pentecost next Sunday, which is often referred to as the birthday of the Church. Pentecost is a powerful and foundational feast and reality for the Church. We live in and know Christ in God now only by the presence and action of the Holy Spirit.

To be open to Jesus as Lord and his salvation through the mercy of the Cross we must accept and invite the Holy Spirit into our lives. Forgiveness and letting go of hurts and wounds is so often the first step to spiritual healing and peace. In preparation then, for this important feast please pray this prayer for healing and forgiveness. The first words of the gospel are those with which we began this Lent\Easter season many weeks ago: 'Repent and believe in the Good News'. Open yourself to Jesus and release to him with sorrow any awareness of sin, unforgiveness, resentment, or anger. Ask His healing love to fill your heart. Pray now this prayer of forgiveness:

Common Prayer for Peace and Forgiveness

God's creation is one of love. As a child of God, created out of love, I have the right to live in an environment of grace. I have the right to live in the awareness of my own goodness and the goodness of all persons, free from the fear of violence due to the greed and oppression of ungodly persons, governments or nations.

I pray for the forgiveness of my sins against the justice of God given me in Christ Jesus. I ask that any words, actions or attitudes of mine that have caused pain or fear be forgiven me.

I ask and pray for the forgiveness of sins of the past caused by my country or any nation of the world that has broken the justice and peace promised by God.

I commit myself to being a person of peace, acting in justice, and bearing the responsibility of creating environments of grace within myself, my family, and in all those places where I live and work.

As a person of peace I can make a difference in the world because of the peace and salvation Christ has given me. I ask God for the grace to do so.

Amen

Now, I invite you to open your heart to the Holy Spirit. As you pray this prayer to the Holy Spirit ask that the grace of your baptism be renewed in you and that the Holy Spirit stir your heart in love and faith in a new way.

We have prayed this prayer commonly in Church. To make the prayer more personal change the pronouns to 'I', or me. Let the prayer speak to you personally.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit of God we invite you, and we desire you in our community of faith. Pour over us the power of your love. Touch each member here with the knowledge of your truth, with the truth of Jesus, the Son of God, whose death on the Cross set us free from the slavery of sin, that we may live in love without fear. Teach us the truth and love of the Father who has given us life.

As each member here, united with the whole Church, prepares for the Feast of Pentecost give us your forgiveness, and the desire for reconciliation. Heal the brokenness that is apart of our lives, and of the whole world. Touch each of us with the blood of Jesus that we may be protected from every evil, remaining strong even as countless temptations swirl around us.

Holy Spirit of God, pour out upon us, again and again, the gifts that are yours: Knowledge, Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Piety, Reverence, and Courage. Let us never lose hope in the power and the promise of your love. In love, teach us always to reverence the sanctity of life in ourselves, in each person, and in all the Father has created.

Holy Spirit of God, make fruitful the love and salvation given each of us in Jesus by his Cross. Pour forth again the charismatic gifts upon our community, and on the whole Church. Do not let us be afraid to love in Jesus' name.

Holy Spirit of God, give unity to all Christian Churches so that as we move ever closer to the fullness of your Kingdom we may with one perfect voice of honor, glory, and adoration lift all praise to the Father in Jesus' name through your power and presence within us. We thank and praise you now and forever. Amen

May the Holy Spirit touch us personally and as a community.

Father John Esper.