

PENTECOST (5/10-11/2008)

Acts 2/1-11, Psalm 104, 1 Corinthians 12/2-13, John 20/19-23

More than once I have sat through the first lesson on Pentecost as the reader struggled with the pronunciation of the many nationalities put forth by St. Luke in this reading from *Acts*.

I can remember one time many years ago when the reading was being done by a high-school sophomore who bogged down totally while pronouncing the names.

He had a sympathetic congregation, however, who immediately, with one voice, read the names along with him.

It made for a great first reading of God's word.

St. Luke, of course, is symbolically telling us that the whole world was gathered to hear the good news of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

If we were making up a similar list in our 21st century, would we know all the nations and nationalities of the world? Which ones would we include?

How many of the countries in the continent of Africa can you name?

What, if anything, do you know of the lives of those millions of people?

Can you name all the nations of the Americas, north, central and south?

Some of the readers of these "*Perspectives on the Scriptures*" are actually from various countries in Africa, in Asia, in Mexico, in Central and South America.

It's possible that they might have a more realistic appreciation of the ethnic make-up of those Jews gathered in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit first appeared.

No matter – the Spirit comes for all people, in all parts of the world.

The Spirit does not recognize nation-states, but embraces everyone as equal before the Lord.

During the recent visit of Pope Benedict, I found myself wondering about the potential for peace if leaders of all the world's countries spoke out with a spirit of truth and love and justice.

We could take giant steps towards eliminating war and violence, inequality, grinding poverty and ignorance.

The first greeting the risen Jesus extends to his disciples is: "*Peace be with you.*"

He is not just saying, "Greetings, and I hope you have a pleasant day."

He is commissioning them to be the disciples of peace to all the world.

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Lots to think about when we meditate on the feast of the Holy Spirit.

This year Pentecost coincides with our celebration of Mothers' Day.

Though Mothers' Day began as a secular celebration (probably aided and abetted by the greeting card, candy and flower interests), still it has touched a place in all of us.

We honor those who have borne us next to their heart in preparation for our sometimes painful entry into existence and who have supported our ongoing perseverance in this life.

Source of life for us, they merit our deepest and most fervent prayers and gratitude.

So, to all Mothers everywhere: ***Happy Mothers' Day.***

You are in our prayers - always.