

Pentecost - First Communion

Alexander, Hilda, Miriam, Leslie, Cristian, Stacy, Mía, Luís, Ángela, Jacqueline, and María, today I took this little plate off the wall of my room and brought it here to show you. It has a picture of the Good Shepherd. I keep it on my wall for several reasons. It comforts me to know that Jesus is a Good Shepherd who will watch over me. It challenges me to take care of other people. And it was gift I received from my Aunt Harriet and Uncle Frank on the day I made my first communion. I still have it 55 years later.

You will probably receive gifts today too. You may get a religious article for your wall or your shelf. You may get a prayer book or a rosary. You may receive something to carry in your pocket. You may get cards and some money. You may have a party at home with food, family and friends. These things will make you feel special.

But the most important gift you receive today is communion. Communion is the most expensive gift you will ever receive. It cost Jesus his life to give you his body and blood. If you got no other gift today or for the rest of your life, communion would be enough.

However, there is something you should know about this gift. You get it not just to have Jesus, but to share Jesus. He gives you his body and blood not just for yourself, but for others. When you receive communion every week, you make yourself a good disciple of Jesus. He comes not just to stay with you, but to help you stand up for what is right.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, when the disciples received a special gift from God, the gift of the Holy Spirit. You remember this story. At the end of Jesus' life, he died on the cross, but he rose from the dead. He appeared to his disciples and later he ascended into heaven. But then he sent the Holy Spirit upon them as he promised. The Spirit guided them into the streets, where they told everyone about Jesus, and the gospel spread throughout the world because each one of them did just what God helped them do.

I hope you enjoy all the gifts you receive today, but remember that God usually gives us gifts for a reason. God expects us to use them for others. God may be asking you to say things that will help others find Christ, especially when people tempt you to do something bad. You will receive the strength you need every week when you receive communion.

Parents and godparents, you have sacrificed for the sake of these children. You have the love of Christ in your heart, and you have shared that love with them. Please, continue to sacrifice for them so that they can grow in faith.

Children, perhaps you will receive a gift today that you will still have 55 years later. But the most important gift you receive today will always be with you for as long as you live. It is Christ himself who comes to you. He loves you, and he asks you - even when it's hard - to show his love to others.