

MAY 18, 2026 FATHER ROSHAN LOY D'SOUZA

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a Catholic nurse working in an ICU in Bergamo shared her experience. The hospital was overwhelmed. Patients were arriving faster than they could be treated. Families were not allowed inside, and many people faced their final moments alone. The nurse described how fear and exhaustion filled the wards—but also spoke of something deeper.

One evening, she held the hand of an elderly man who was struggling to breathe. He could not speak much, but he whispered, “God is here, isn’t He?” The nurse nodded, even through her tears. She later said that in that moment, she realized that while medicine could do much, it was the presence of God that gave true peace. She and a few colleagues began quietly praying before each shift, asking for strength, courage, and the grace to be instruments of hope. “We were tired,” she said, “but we were not alone.”

This real-life experience brings us directly into the heart of today’s readings.

In the First Reading from Acts (19:1–8), Paul meets believers who have faith, but something is missing—they have not yet received the Holy Spirit. Once they receive the Spirit, they are transformed. Their faith becomes alive, courageous, and active.

That nurse and her colleagues experienced something similar. They already believed in God, but in the midst of crisis, they became more deeply aware of His presence. It was the Holy Spirit who strengthened them—giving them courage to face each day, compassion to care for the suffering, and peace in the middle of chaos.

Without the Spirit, faith can remain something we practice occasionally. With the Spirit, faith becomes the strength that sustains us, especially in moments of crisis.

In the Gospel from John, the disciples express confidence in Jesus. But Jesus knows that their faith will soon be tested. He tells them clearly: “In the world you will have trouble, but take courage; I have conquered the world.”

The pandemic was a moment of global “trouble.” It brought fear, isolation, loss, and uncertainty. Many people felt scattered—just as the disciples did when Jesus spoke those words. Even strong believers struggled with questions, anxiety, and doubt.

And yet, like that nurse holding the patient’s hand, many also discovered something profound: Christ was present even in the darkest moments. Not always removing the suffering, but giving strength to endure it.

This is the kind of peace Jesus speaks about—not a peace that comes from everything going well, but a peace that comes from knowing that He has already overcome the world.

Today, these readings invite us to reflect on our own lives.

Like the disciples in Acts, we may have faith—but is it alive with the Holy Spirit? Do we invite the Spirit into our daily struggles, or do we rely only on our own strength?

Like the disciples in the Gospel, we may speak confidently about our faith—but how do we respond when challenges come? Do we become anxious and scattered, or do we hold on to Christ’s promise?

The COVID experience taught the world a powerful lesson: human strength has limits, but God’s grace does not. When everything else seemed uncertain, the presence of God remained constant.

So, the readings of today have powerful life messages:

First, invite the Holy Spirit into your life every day. It is the Spirit who gives courage in fear, hope in despair, and strength in weakness.

Second, do not be surprised by trials. Jesus Himself told us that difficulties are part of life. But He also assures us that He has already overcome them.

Third, be a source of God's presence to others. Like that nurse, a simple gesture—a word, a prayer, a moment of compassion—can bring peace to someone in their darkest hour.

Finally, hold on to Christ's victory. No matter what we face, His words remain true: "Take courage; I have conquered the world."

And so, in every moment of fear or uncertainty, may we remember: we are never alone. The Holy Spirit is within us, and Christ walks with us—bringing light even into the darkest situations.

Let our prayer be : Heavenly Father,
we come before You with humble hearts, grateful for Your Word that guides and strengthens us.

Lord, in the encounter of Your servant Paul the Apostle with the disciples, we see how faith comes alive through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Pour out that same Spirit upon us today.

Where our faith is weak, strengthen it.

Where our hearts are hesitant, fill them with courage.

Where we feel empty, renew us with Your living presence.

Come, Holy Spirit,
awaken in us a deeper faith—
not just words we speak, but a life we live.
Help us to trust in You more fully each day.

Lord Jesus,
You know our struggles and our fears.
You see how often we say we believe,
yet become anxious when trials come.
Still, You speak to us with love and truth:
“In the world you will have trouble, but take courage; I have conquered
the world.”

Grant us that courage, O Lord.
When we feel overwhelmed, remind us that You are near.
When we are scattered by worries and doubts, gather us back into Your
peace.
Teach us to trust not in our own strength, but in Your victory.

Amen.