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When the risen Jesus appeared for the first time to the disciples huddled behind locked doors, he spoke to them reassuringly, "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' " (John 20:22). This Gospel text, which links the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Easter event, is proclaimed at both ends of the Easter season, on the Second Sunday of Easter and again on Pentecost Sunday.

The presence and action of the Holy Spirit is a recurring theme throughout the Easter season. Selections from the Acts of the Apostles unfold ways in which the Spirit animated and guided the early community to give witness to Christ's resurrection. In the final weeks of the season, readings from the Gospel of John include the promise of Jesus to send the Advocate to abide with his followers.

Fittingly, the Easter season culminates in the celebration of Pentecost, the fiftieth day, when the liturgy focuses squarely on the gift of the Holy Spirit. We remember that the Spirit of the risen Lord abides even now in the community of disciples, bestowing a variety of gifts, drawing us together in love, sending and guiding us to carry on the mission of Christ in the world.

The liturgies of Pentecost Sunday should clearly be filled with music that draws the community to encounter the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst, but the earlier Sundays of the Easter season should also echo the biblical texts that connect the gift of the Spirit to the Easter mystery.

Pastoral musicians and music planners might appropriately begin by drawing on traditional texts and music. Two of the most significant hymn texts in the Roman Catholic tradition that invoke the Holy Spirit are the well-known *Veni Creator Spiritus*, and the Pentecost sequence, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. Both of these hymns are treasures that come down to us with chant tunes. They are worthy and valuable liturgical songs, whether sung in Latin or in vernacular languages.

These two texts have also appeared in various translations and adaptations and are set to many different tunes. Among hymns based on *Veni Creator Spiritus* are the classic *Come, Holy Ghost* as well as *Creator Spirit, by Whose Aid*; *Creator Spirit, Lord*

of Grace; Come, Spirit Blest; and O Holy Spirit, by Whose Breath. See the music suggestions in the June issue of Celebration for a complete list of settings of the sequence hymn Veni Sancte Spiritus, including translations, paraphrases and adaptations.

In addition to these classic texts, there is also a wealth of both traditional and contemporary hymnody that draws upon and expands on biblical and liturgical imagery. Among these many and varied images for the presence and action of the Holy Spirit are breath of life, dove, gentle breeze, raging wind, fire, radiant light, comforter, guide, giver of gifts, warmth, coolness, indwelling, love and many others. Liturgical song can be greatly enriched by hymns and songs that make generous use of these and other images and that foster the assembly's encounter with the Spirit who cannot be confined. Look also for fresh musical settings that offer varied expressions of the Spirit's presence — some strong and compelling, some warm and gentle, some surprising and even disturbing.

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Music planners should take care not to neglect the mission aspect in celebrating and singing the Holy Spirit. In Luke's account of Jesus' inaugural sermon, a passage from the book of the prophet Isaiah is quoted: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). There are a number of liturgical hymns and songs that link the gift of the Spirit to the mission of Christian disciples in the world, including several that directly quote the text cited above, such as The Spirit of God (Deiss) and The Spirit Sends Us Forth (Dufner).

The music of Easter and Pentecost can open not only the ears and mouths of the faithful, but also their minds and hearts to the power and action of the Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

**Editor's note:** This reflection was originally published in the May 2017 issue of [Celebration](#). Sign up to receive [daily Easter reflections](#).

This story appears in the **Daily Easter Reflections** feature series. [View the full series](#).