

**Reflections on Readings: (First reading) Romans 8:5-27 and (Second Reading)
Treatise Against Heresies by St. Irenaeus**

Marilyn Pipkin, OP – May 20, 2018

Today we celebrate Pentecost—the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon us. As human beings we are both flesh and spirit. These two natures are both fighting for control of us. St. Paul tells us that embracing the fleshly desires leads to spiritual death while embracing the leading of the Spirit leads to life and peace. Through Baptism we become heirs of God with Christ “provided we suffer with Him (vs.17).” Throughout our journey toward eternal life we will struggle with the selfishness of the flesh, but by patient endurance and the aid of the Holy Spirit we can conquer our lower nature. St. Irenaeus reminds us that we must recognize the power of the Holy Spirit in us even when we feel empty. Feelings are fleeting, unreliable and often do not reflect reality. We are baptized into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is reality whether we feel that consolation or not. Since we have our accuser, Satan, we need an Advocate, the Holy Spirit, as well. Jesus has entrusted us to the Holy Spirit. When we feel oppressed, groaning, not knowing how to pray, the Spirit Himself makes intercessions for us. We have the graces we need to be fruitful, but we need to courageously work to yield a rich harvest for the Lord.