

**VIGIL** - "He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive."

**DAY** - As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Once upon a time**, years ago, Leonard LeSourd, an editor of "Guideposts" magazine, was at a formal dinner with 10 other people. They were discussing a movie about Jesus. Suddenly, a young woman, obviously bored with the conversation, said: **"Well, who would want to be like Jesus anyway?"**

An awkward silence fell across the table. The conversation veered off in a totally different direction.

Later, LeSourd asked himself: **"Why did that young woman's remark create such an awkward silence?"**

He concluded: some of the people were intimidated by her remark, others were just as bored as she was, and still others realized that they didn't know Jesus well enough to decide if they wanted to be like him or not.

Then—LeSourd asked himself about his own understanding of Jesus. He concluded that he had known 5 Christs in the course of his lifetime:

**1<sup>st</sup> Christ**, he met in Sunday school...That Christ came in the form of a picture. It was a stern-looking Jesus, whose picture hung on the wall. This Jesus failed to impress a 9-year-old, who was far more interested in playing baseball than in learning about a 2,000-year-old Israelite. So, LeSourd's 1<sup>st</sup> Christ was a **"fanciful Christ,"** who existed only in his own, immature mind.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Christ**, he met in college...He was the Christ of history. It was the Christ, whose impact on history has been so immense that even non-Christians call him, "history's greatest person." But, & there's that proverbial **BUT** again, the historical Christ didn't touch him personally. He was just another great man, like Lincoln. Viewing Christ in this way was very comfortable for him during college & the four years afterwards, as an Army Air Corps pilot. This was his **"historical Christ."**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Christ**, he met mustering out of the service...He got a job at "Guideposts" magazine, interviewing people about their faith. In doing so, he learned that many successful people lived their lives by the teachings and life of Christ. He found himself reading the Gospels to learn more about him and his teachings. And thus, LeSourd met his 3<sup>rd</sup> Christ: the **"teacher Christ."**

**4<sup>th</sup> Christ**, he met on retreat...The retreat-theme was "Commitment to Jesus." In chapel one night, a young man got up & told the others how, late the prior night, he'd come into the chapel, knelt down, and committed his life to Jesus. LeSourd was embarrassed by the young man's complete openness. **BUT**, at the same time, he found himself wanting what that young man had found. So-o, before the retreat ended, late one night, LeSourd went into the chapel, knelt down, & committed his life to Jesus. He recalls that unforgettable moment this way:

**"I found myself in this chapel, on my knees before the altar, saying a simple prayer..."**

**'Lord, I don't know how I happen to be here, but I want to give my life to you. I do so...now.'** "

With that, LeSourd found his 4<sup>th</sup> Christ. It was his **"Savior Christ."** It was the Christ who loved him in a deep, personal way.

From that day on, Jesus became the center and focus of his life. So, LeSourd's understanding of Christ progressed, dare I say, **"evolved,"** from the **"fanciful Christ"** to the **"historical Christ,"** to the **"teacher Christ,"** to the **"Savior Christ."**

And this brings us to LeSourd's **5<sup>th</sup> & final Christ**... whom he met in a most unexpected way.

**5<sup>th</sup> Christ**, he met...one day, when he found himself being severely tempted. It was the kind of major temptation that we all experience from time to time. LeSourd felt himself falling. He reached out frantically for something to hold on to. He found it... in the commitment he made to Jesus, years before, on that retreat!

He found something else, too. He found his most meaningful relationship with Jesus yet. It was contact with the **“indwelling Christ.”** It was contact with the Risen Christ, who began to “indwell” his followers, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them on Pentecost Sunday 2,000 years ago.

Now, everything in the New Testament began to fit together and make more sense than ever.

LeSourd saw how the Apostles had also committed themselves to Jesus in a burst of fervor. **BUT**, when severe temptation came to them, they too fell back into their old ways. Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, and, all but one, fled and abandoned him.

It wasn't until Pentecost, when they received the Holy Spirit of Jesus, that the Apostles were really transformed.

On that 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost 2,000 years ago, the spirit of the risen Jesus began to **“indwell”** his followers in a powerful way.

**And THAT'S what we celebrate today!** We celebrate that important day in the history of Christianity when, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, the risen Jesus began to **“indwell”** his followers with a personal presence.

I often refer to his **“indwelling”** simply, as his “presence” in our lives, in a profound way, e.g., at Communion time. I experience his powerful “presence,” his “indwelling,” every time I consecrate the bread and wine into his precious Body & Blood. This makes me feel elated, as well as utterly humbled. If there is any ‘downside’ to the priesthood, this makes it all worthwhile.

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We may compare LeSourd's gradual growth, dare I say his **spiritual evolution**, in his understanding of Jesus (actually his **relationship** with Jesus) to 5 stages of a plant's physical growth.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Christ</b> , the <b>“fanciful Christ”</b> of his childhood, corresponds to the <b>seed</b> of a plant.
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Christ</b> , the <b>“historical Christ,”</b> corresponds to the green <b>stem</b> that emerges from the seed.
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Christ</b> , the <b>“teacher Christ,”</b> corresponds to the <b>bud</b> that forms at the top of the stem.
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Christ</b> , the <b>“Savior Christ,”</b> corresponds to the <b>flower</b> that bursts from the bud.
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Christ</b> , the <b>“indwelling Christ,”</b> corresponds to the <b>fruit</b> that develops from the flower.

It is this **5<sup>th</sup> and final stage** that we celebrate on **Pentecost**.

Specifically, it is the **“presence”** of the **“indwelling Christ”** in the Church as a whole, in spite of its management by humans like me,

AND

we celebrate this day his **“indwelling presence”** in each of us individually.

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you with his **“indwelling presence”**...  
the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.