A Way to Pentecost: Friday



**Reading: John 16: 21-23**  
When a woman is in labour, she has pain, because her hour has come.  
But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish  
because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world.  
So you have pain now; but I will see you again,  
 and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.  
 On that day you will ask nothing of me.  
 Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name,  
he will give it to you.

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**Wondering**  
How does this image of a woman giving birth speak to me?   
Have I experienced or witnessed a birth - and do I agree with Jesus?  
 How can I help to support people through the process - easing their pain and encouraging them through what may be difficult times?

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**Contemplating**  
Read the passage through slowly and see if any words or phrases seem to stand out for you. Why might they have spoken to you at this time? Do they offer any insights into what God might be asking of you?

***or***Jesus is saying these words during what is called "the Last Discourse" - trying to say things the disciples may not have understood at the time but would come to understand after his Resurrection and, especially, after the Pentecost event. Try to put yourself in their shoes. Imagine how this day - the day after the first Ascension Thursday - would have felt to those disciples: they knew something was going to happen but not what - nor when. What might they have said to encourage each other as they waited for this "something" that they were waiting for?

**Reflecting**  
This may not be the most comfortable Gospel reading to start our Novena until Pentecost - but speaking of birth gives us hope.  
For some people, there is apprehension about the future - like a woman wondering how she will cope with labour. Others are excited at the prospect of new possibilities and see great opportunities beyond any initial pain.

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**Praying***Pray for those for whom the future looks worrying - even terrifying.   
Pray for their consolation and comfort.*

Come, Holy Spirit,  
to all who are preparing to give birth to new ideas and ways of being.  
Give comfort to those who are apprehensive,  
confidence to those preparing for change,  
and trust in your guidance.

**From the Sequence for Pentecost**  
Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,   
From the clear celestial height  
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

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**‘Action Point’ from the writing of Pope Francis**

Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter  
with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out.  
The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer…

*(Evangelii Gaudium 262)*

* How might you act on one of Pope Francis’ suggestions today?