Columns
Horizons
Spirituality

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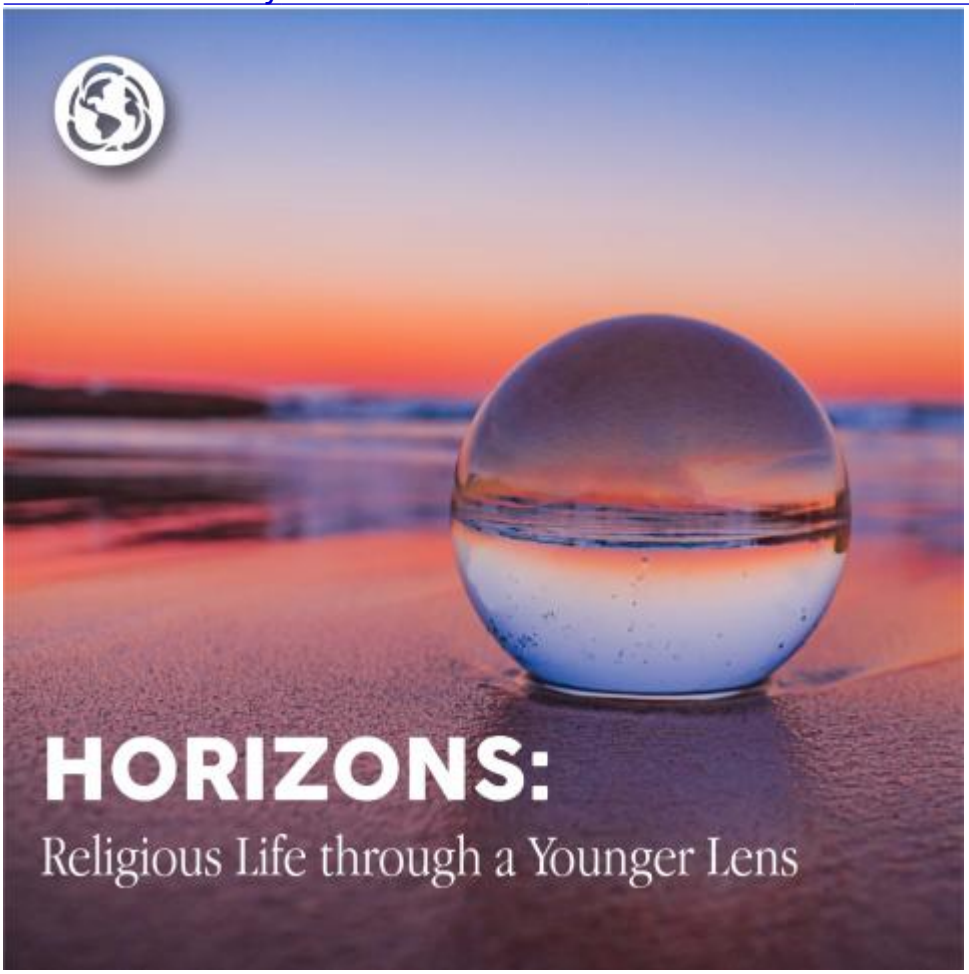

"The Spirit makes us see everything in a new way, with the eyes of Jesus," said Pope Francis on the solemnity of Pentecost, June 5, 2022. It is that same Spirit who moves us toward life, freedom, joy, and hope.

In Cuba, as in so many parts of the world, we continue to need the breath of the Spirit — the breath of life, the Holy *Ruah* that renews us, stirs us, and continues to call us to embrace hope. We are living in difficult, complex times on an island where even the most basic things are increasingly affected, and where disillusionment and despair have deeply taken root. At times, it feels like we are "caught in the snares of death" (cf. Psalm 116), and that life itself becomes impossible. And yet, the wind of the Spirit "blows where it wills" (cf. John 3:8), and remains undeniably present in the midst of our reality.

I've seen it in our streets — in the mothers who never stop searching and hoping for what's best for their children, who still get up early each morning to put food on the table. In the workers who, after long hours of waiting in the heat and standing in endless lines to reach their jobs, still treat you with kindness and offer you a smile. In the grandparents who take their grandchildren to school, who play with them, listen to them, and shower them with tenderness.

I've seen it in our neighborhoods — in neighbors who treat one another like family, who look out for each other. In the generosity of those who share the little they have so someone else can have something, too. In the children who run, dream and laugh, needing so little to be happy.

I've witnessed it within our homes — in those who inspire, support and nurture the creativity of others, refusing to be defeated by difficulties. In those who "make do" with what's available, who encourage others with good humor, chatting in their front porches and greeting passersby.

> "In Cuba, as in so many parts of the world, we continue to need the breath of the Spirit — the breath of life, the Holy *Ruah* that renews us, stirs us, and continues to call us to embrace hope": Sr. Daylenis Lara Rodríguez
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I sense the Spirit in the hearts of those who dare to love, who rise each day to give their best wherever they are. In quiet resilience. In growing awareness. Even in complaints — because when pain is given voice, it also reveals a yearning for life.

I feel the Spirit's presence in the beauty of creation: in the sky, the sea, the sun and the breeze. I feel the closeness of the God of Love — the One who dwells among us, surrounds us, fills us, and makes himself known in those who work for a more vibrant Cuba.

I also find the Spirit in the church — in small communities sustained by the steadfast faith of women whose strength has only grown over time. In the quiet witness of religious life: listening, walking with the people, caring for the elderly, bringing joy and hope to children, creating spaces for youth, and speaking out where others remain silent. In so many priests who "smell like their sheep," who reach the poorest corners, the "human and existential peripheries," bringing the Word, the Bread of

Life, and the breath of the Spirit.

The Spirit is already among us — in Cuba and in every corner of this world. All we need is to open ourselves to the Spirit's mysterious movement in our lives. To open our eyes, minds, and hearts to welcome this Breath of Life who already lives within us. All we need is to allow ourselves to be transformed from within — by the Source of Life and Love — and from there, to open our hearts to the world, to those around us, to a reality that can only change when we are changed from within.

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May this Pentecost celebration find us with open hearts, ready to make space for the Spirit, to welcome his presence and to allow its life-giving power to be active in our lives. And with the Spirit, may we embrace the hope of a brighter present, a more vibrant Cuba, and a better world that is already being born deep within us.

Out of my personal prayer, a psalm emerged—my way to invoke the Spirit:

I know you fill me with life,
I know you walk with me now,
I know you place in my hands
All your creative power.

You flood my being with joy,
You pour your fire in me,
Your strength empowers me
To overcome every fear.

You breathe life into each step,
You renew my whole being,
You fill each morning I live
With dreams and delight anew.

You work wonders within me,
Even when I fail to see them.
I open myself to you, Holy Spirit —
Welcoming you is my heart's desire.