

## PENTECOST SUNDAY, Year B

“THE HOLY SPIRIT: GOD’S GIFT OF HIMSELF TO US”

The feast of Pentecost has its roots in Judaism. Originally known as the feast of weeks (Deut. 16:10) or the feast of Harvest (Ex. 23:16). Because it was celebrated by Greek-speaking Jews, the feast came to be known as Pentecost (Tob. 2:1), meaning ‘fiftieth’ and ‘refers to the timing of the festival, which took place fifty days after the spring celebration of Passover (Lev. 23:15-16).’<sup>i</sup>

Pentecost became a Christian feast when the Holy Spirit came down upon the apostles seven weeks after Jesus celebrated his final Passover (Acts 2:1-4).

Pentecost is the day in which the Holy Trinity is revealed. Jesus, having been sent by the Father and having returned to the Father, sent His Spirit in abundance upon the disciples who were gathered for the feast of Pentecost. This Holy Spirit is the promised *Paraclete*, meaning literally ‘one who is called to one’s side’; the *advocate*; the *consoler*; the *Spirit of truth*. (see CCC, n. 692)

We remember Pentecost as the event which marks the founding of the Church as the bearer of God’s Spirit to the world. All baptized members of the Church have a share in this same spirit and are called to participate in the mission of the Church.

‘The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church ... The Spirit *prepares* men and goes out to them with his grace, in order to draw them to Christ. The Spirit *manifests* the risen Lord to them, recalls his word to them and opens their minds to the understanding of his Death and Resurrection. [The Spirit] *makes present* the mystery of Christ, supremely in the Eucharist, in order to reconcile them, [The Spirit brings] *them into communion* with God, that they may “bear much fruit.”’ (CCC, n. 737)

The principle, ‘No one gives what he does not have’, applies here. The mission of the Church depends on our own communion with God, which will manifest itself by the fruits of the Holy Spirit: the fruits of ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.’<sup>ii</sup>

As we celebrate Pentecost, may we be mindful of the fact that it is the Holy Spirit, poured out on us, who animates and sanctifies us, who strengthens us in our weakness and who intercedes for us.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created  
and you shall renew the face of the earth.

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<sup>i</sup> CATHOLIC BIBLE DICTIONARY, 2009, Scott Hahn, General Editor, Doubleday, NY, p. 693.

<sup>ii</sup> Gal. 5:22