

**FATHER MARK SCHULTE HOMILY**  
**Pentecost Sunday (B)**  
**May 23, 2021**  
**“Life in the Spirit”**

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We have come to the end of the Easter Season. Fifty days ago, we celebrated our Lord’s resurrection from the grave on Easter Sunday. For forty days Jesus appeared to many of His disciples until He ascended into heaven. Before ascending into heaven, He told His disciples that He would not leave them orphans, but that He would send them the paraclete who would teach them all things. Some ten days after He ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit came to the apostles in the place that they were praying.

The Holy Spirit came in the form of wind and fire penetrating the house, even though the doors were closed. From that time on, they were no longer afraid. They could speak to people of differing languages. And the Church began to grow. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church is able to overcome the confusion of languages which occurred at the Tower of Babel (Gen 11:5-9); (Vat II, Ad gentes 4).

We call this event Pentecost. It marks the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. Fifty days after the resurrection, this Feast of Pentecost reflects the Old Testament Jewish feast of Pentecost which took place 50 days after the feast of Passover. The Jewish feast celebrated the harvest, a material gift from God. The Christian feast of Pentecost celebrates a spiritual harvest where the Holy Spirit pours out His spiritual gifts and fruits upon those who wish to possess them. And so, we transition from a material blessing to a spiritual blessing.

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit made himself known by a powerful wind and by fire. In the Old Testament, God sometimes made His presence known in this way as well (Ex 3:2). God spoke to Moses from the burning bush. The prophet Elijah felt the presence of God in the gentle whisper at the cave where he took refuge (1 Kg 19:9-18). Jesus said the Holy Spirit is everywhere, like the wind. You do not “know its origin or where it goes” (Jn 3:8).

The Church has a mission given to Her by Christ and every member of the church shares in that mission, which is to share the Gospel message by helping others come to know Jesus Christ such that they can attain eternal life with God in heaven (CCC 849-856). This mission sounds simple enough but fulfilling it is not so easy. The task of the Holy Spirit is to strengthen and sanctify the members of God’s Church in fulfilling His will. To do this, the Holy Spirit bestows upon those who wish to receive them His spiritual gifts and fruits. Scripture speaks of these seven gifts as being wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord (Isa 11:1-2); (CCC 1831).

The person who possesses these gifts of the Holy Spirit will manifest certain holy characteristics in their life called fruits of the Holy Spirit. These 12 fruits are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. Each of these fruits have their own unique characteristics (CCC 1832); (Gal 5:22-23).

The gifts of the Holy Spirit sustain and direct the moral life of the Christian. They complete and perfect the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, as well as the virtues of faith, hope, and charity (CCC 1768, 1803).

The Catholic Church makes every effort to help the faithful attain the power of the Holy Spirit in their life. She does this primarily through the bestowing of the sacraments which Jesus gave to His Church. Each of the seven sacraments in their own way make the Holy Spirit present to God's people, but especially the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation (CCC 1289, 1116, 739).

Jesus said, "I am the vine, and you are the branches, apart from me you will wither and die." It is His Holy Spirit, the spirit of life which Jesus imparts to His people, that they may live and not die (CCC 108).

Unfortunately, many separate themselves from Jesus by cutting themselves off from His spirit. They no longer pray or frequent the sacraments. The world has its own ways of hindering a person from sharing in God's spirit. It requires a daily, conscious effort to immerse ourselves in God's spirit.

All believers should daily examine themselves and ask to what extent they possess the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

- Can others see these gifts and fruits active in my life?
- Are there sinful activities in my life that are blocking the action of the Holy Spirit?
- What can I do such that I am living in the Holy Spirit?
- Am I conscious that the Holy Spirit is trying to reach me? (open your heart)
- How can I help others be more aware of needing the Holy Spirit active in their lives?
- Am I praying daily to the Holy Spirit and in the Holy Spirit?
- Am I receiving the sacraments of Eucharist and Confession regularly?

Let us pray the Holy Spirit prayer together:

*"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 thou shall renew the face of the earth."  
Amen.*