



Pentecost

The Descent of the Holy
Spirit
& birth of the Church

Pentecost

Pentecost means the 50th day

It was on the 50th day after Easter Sunday that the Church as we know it began.

The risen Jesus had been with his disciples for 40 days before the ascension.

Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit

Before Jesus left, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to help them. He told them not to be afraid when He was gone. "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you." (John 14: 26)



Pentecost - the Holy Spirit comes



The Apostles went to the upper room of a house to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Tradition says that they prayed for 9 days (this was the first Novena). Mary was with them too. They were afraid to go out and preach as Jesus had asked them to do.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak with diverse tongues, according as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak.” [Acts 2:2-4]



The Apostles proclaim the Gospel

The disciples were suddenly empowered to proclaim the gospel of the risen Christ.

They went out into the streets of Jerusalem and began preaching to the crowds gathered in the city.

Not only did the disciples preach with boldness and vigour, but by a miracle of the Holy Spirit they spoke in the native languages of the people present, many who had come from all corners of the Roman Empire.



St. Peter's Speech

- The apostle Peter seized the moment and addressed the crowd, preaching to them about Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. The result was that about three thousand converts were baptized that day.



Birth of the Church

Pentecost is known as the birthday of the Church, because it is the first time the Apostles went out to the people to speak about God in this way, and administered a Sacrament too!



The Early Church

After Pentecost the Apostles went to other countries to tell all nations about God and His love for us. The Holy Spirit they had received gave them the strength and courage for this task.

The "Acts of the Apostles" can be read in the New Testament of the Bible and it tells us a lot of what the Apostles did after Pentecost, in particular St. Peter and St. Paul. Many of the Apostles were imprisoned and martyred (killed) because of their beliefs but greeted their sufferings with joy because they were doing God's work.

THE EFFECT OF PENTECOST

- A "*learning church*". (*didache*) That she is engaged in recalling the Masters example and learning from it, and as a result of Pentecost, the apostles themselves have teaching authority (proved by the many signs and wonders, for example Acts 2:43, 3:1-10, and so on).
- It is a "*Loving church*". (*koinonia*) The church sees itself in fellowship, with each member and with the Holy Trinity, a divine and human *koinonia*.

- The church was a "*worshipping church*". (*leiturgia*) The members "devoted themselves...to the breaking of bread and to prayer". This may refer to formal and informal worship. Religion of the Temple and the home.
- It was a prayerful and "*an evangelistic church*". (*diakonia*) The Holy Spirit had changed the disciples into a missionary, "loving, caring, sharing church". (Stott, p87)



Pope Benedict and the Holy Spirit

- Pope Benedict said: "Holy Spirit continues today to act with power in the Church...it is important that each one of us know the Spirit, establish a relationship with Him and allow ourselves to be guided by Him...we must welcome Him as the guide of our souls...He alone can open us up to faith and to allow us to live it each day to the full."
- Just as we receive Jesus every week in Holy Communion, we need to ask the Holy Spirit to fill us often also.

