

## Pentecost - A

It has been said that the Holy Spirit is the forgotten Person of the Holy Trinity. Perhaps this is because it is the hardest of the three to visualize: there are images of doves and tongues of fire but we know that these are only symbols. So when we pray we often pray to the Father or the Son. And there's of course nothing wrong with that either, because the Trinity is one; there is no division among them. Jesus himself said that if you have seen the Son you have seen the Father. So when we pray to one, we are praying to all. This is all a part of the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

However, this is the feast of Pentecost, not the feast of the Holy Trinity (next Sunday), so I am going to talk about the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the Trinity and does play a distinct role. The Holy Spirit appears in Scripture from the very beginning of Genesis: the Spirit of God moving over the waters. I

like this image of the Holy Spirit as a kind of wind, because I think it expresses very well who the Holy Spirit is. For example, we can't see the wind, we can only see its effects. When the wind blows, you don't see the wind itself, you see the trees moving, or waves moving, or leaves blowing around. It's the same with the Holy Spirit: we can't see the Holy Spirit; we rather see the Holy Spirit's effects. We see or experience the **work** of the Holy Spirit in the world.

When Jesus ascended into heaven, the age of the Church began, in which we all now have the responsibility and the privilege of sharing the Gospel with the world, and growing in holiness to be able to fulfill this mission the Lord has given us. But we are also incapable of doing these things on our own. That is why the Lord sent his Holy Spirit. He sent his Spirit upon his disciples who were gathered together in the Upper Room, the same room where the Last Supper took place, to enable to go out and spread the Gospel.

It's interesting that this is where they received the Holy Spirit, because that is also where Jesus gave us the Eucharist. *The gift of the Holy Spirit and the Eucharist* – the two principle modes, if you will, of God's presence in the world, and the two principle sources of grace, which by the way, we **all** receive in the three Sacraments of Initiation: baptism, confirmation, and communion. It all fits together; God knows exactly what he's doing!

So how do we let the Holy Spirit work in us and through us? There's a book called *In the School of the Holy Spirit* written by a French priest named Jacques Philippe in which he gives multiple suggestions about how we can invite the Holy Spirit to work in us; I'm going to mention just a few of them. First, we open ourselves up to the working and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by practicing praise and gratitude. In other words, we ought to reflect upon how the Lord has **already** been at work in our lives. What are the gifts that He has given us and continues to give us? And

then let us give thanks and praise to the Lord for what He has *already* given us. This is how St. Therese of Lisieux expressed it: “What most attracts the grace of God is gratitude, because if we give Him thanks for a blessing, he is moved to hurry to give us ten more. And if we thank him again with the same outpouring of gratitude, what an incredible multiplication of graces! This has been my experience,” she said, “try it and you will see.”

Second, we must desire and even ask for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Don't worry about not being worthy, of course we're not worthy, but God doesn't measure our worthiness. Rather, He looks out at the desire in our hearts. Don't hesitate to ask for the Holy Spirit to come upon you and to work in you. This is the gift that God desires to give us. We often ask God for things like good health, perhaps some financial help here and there, good weather on vacation, etc. – nothing wrong with asking for these things. But what God really desires to give us is so much greater than that!

And the third thing I would like to mention, is to practice self-abandonment to the Lord. This is a form of obedience to the Lord – childlike obedience – in which we surrender ourselves to God’s will, whatever it might be, whether we like it or not, whether it aligns with our will or not. Instead of rebelling in our hearts and getting upset about the daily frustrations in life – or even the trials and tribulations – we can practice surrendering our will to God. This doesn’t mean a passive acceptance of whatever horrible thing comes along or an excuse to not do anything to help anyone. We are still called to right wrongs, seek justice, and so on. What I am referring to is where your heart is in the face of injustice or when things don’t go your way. These things can be an opportunity for frustration, anger, and hatred, or they can be an opportunity to grow in grace and to let the Holy Spirit work through us to bring about change. And when we are open to the Holy Spirit, it is amazing what can happen.

How does the Holy Spirit want to work through you? If you have been baptized, whether you know or not, you have already received the Holy Spirit. Now we just have to cooperate and be open to the movement of the Spirit in our lives. If we do this, we will make visible the work of the Holy Spirit in the world.

- **May 24, 2026 at St. Mary's, Spring Lake**