

PENTECOST

WHEN THE DAY OF PENTECOST HAD COME, THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE. AND SUDDENLY FROM HEAVEN THERE CAME A SOUND LIKE THE RUSH OF A VIOLENT WIND, AND IT FILLED THE ENTIRE HOUSE WHERE THEY WERE SITTING. DIVIDED TONGUES, AS OF FIRE, APPEARED AMONG THEM, AND A TONGUE RESTED ON EACH OF THEM. ALL OF THEM WERE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.¹

From the first time I heard that passage, I yearned to be in that room. Imagine being there. You have been in and out of that room for days, most likely weeks, meeting with friends, talking about Jesus, sitting in quiet meditation and prayer. I hope that I would be one of those believing that Jesus has risen as He said, but, if I am honest with myself, I am probably wanting to believe and drawing the strength to not sink into doubt from those around me. But then – a noise, a wind. I can imagine sensing it before I hear it or feel it. And my heart and my soul fill with the Holy Spirit. My eyes lift to heaven and all doubts and fears leave me. Like the disciples on their way to Emmaus, I understand – everything! All the pieces fall into place and I am ready to tell others – to pass on the good news.

That's how I imagine it. Each time I say the Glorious Mysteries, each time I recite the Litany of the Holy Spirit, I am back in that room. Just to be there! Imagine!

But each of us has been there. We received the gifts of the Holy Spirit at our baptism when we were too young to know, and then we received them again at Confirmation when we consciously accepted them. We have been 'filled with the Holy Spirit'. "The Holy Spirit abides with us always, he is always within us, in our hearts."²

Yet, it is up to us to call on Him and awaken to the power of the gifts we received. "When we receive and welcome him into our heart, the Holy Spirit immediately begins to make us sensitive to his voice and to guide our thoughts, our feelings and our intentions according to the heart of God."³ We must be conscious of the Holy Spirit in our lives and open ourselves to his gifts through our prayers. In Pope Francis' words: "through prayer we make space so that the Spirit may come and help us in that moment, that he may counsel us on what we all must do. Prayer! Never forget prayer."⁴

It is through our prayers that we call on the Holy Spirit as our Paraclete, our Advocate, our Defender and our Comforter. In our world, we are constantly under pressure from work, family, finances and responsibilities. Decisions become difficult when viewed through the eyes of ambition, pride and lifestyle. There isn't a day that goes by, that we can navigate through this world on our own, doing what is right in the eyes of God. As Catholics, it is up to each one of us to become the best version of ourselves – to live our lives moving toward holiness. But it is only through God's graces that we can take that journey.

The Holy Spirit is the grace of God. "The action of the Holy Spirit penetrates the depths of the person, the hearts of the faithful, and pours out upon them the light and grace which gives life."⁵

As Paraclete, the Spirit can help us to see what is right and give us the strength to take that path. Calling upon the Holy Spirit in our hearts each time we are at a crossroad or have a major decision to make, gives us the peace and confidence to walk the path as God would have us walk it. The Spirit can help us to understand the way of God and by helping us to become stronger in our faith, a better knowledge of its mysteries. A prayer I always ask the Holy Spirit as I study my faith: Help me to understand, allow me to challenge, never let me doubt. The Holy Spirit can be called on to guide us, not just in what we do, but in how we think, how we love.

As Advocate, we know the Holy Spirit is with us. Asking the Spirit to strengthen our resolve to do the right thing or to give us the courage to stand up for what is just, provides us with an inner peace to think clearly and to remain secure. Remember that we have been filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore have the gifts of the Spirit in us. That includes wisdom and knowledge. Those gifts have been given to each of us for a reason. However, without our faith and belief in God's love and the power of the Holy Spirit, those gifts remain quiet in our hearts waiting for us to recognize them and develop them through prayer.

As Defender, we know we can call on the Holy Spirit to give us the fortitude and courage to take a stand. And when we are under attack – literally and figuratively – it is the Holy Spirit to whom we can confidently pray to help in our defense. “For I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict.”⁶

And as Comforter, oh, how we need the Holy Spirit. We can pray for his warmth, his love, his strength, as we face the world and all that is in it. We can ask for the Spirit's help in facing up to our sins and his comfort in our repentance. We can cry up for the Spirit's love and compassion to hold us steady as we face life's blows. We cannot handle these alone. The Holy Spirit filled our hearts and our souls long ago – we must not be indifferent to one of God's greatest gifts to us.

And each year, at Pentecost, we are again filled with the Spirit. We renew our baptism and accept once again his gifts. You see, we were in that room – and we are in that room every year. We have received those same gifts that they received all those years ago. This year, lift your eyes to heaven. Imagine the sound of the Spirit in the wind, the touch of his comfort and love, the joy as he fills your heart and soul. And raise your prayers to call on the Holy Spirit each and every day to awaken his gifts within you so that you can stand firmly in God's love alongside the Paraclete, the Advocate, the Defender and the Comforter. This is God's gift to you.

“And this is what the Holy Spirit does with us: he opens our minds, he opens us to understand better, to understand better the things of God, human things, situations, all things.”⁷

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy. Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy. Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy. Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy. Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.⁸

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¹ Acts 2:1-4.

² Pope Francis, [General Audience April 9 2014](#).

³ Pope Francis, [General Audience May 7 2014](#).

⁴ Pope Francis, [General Audience May 7 2014](#).

⁵ Blessed John Paul II, [General Audience March 20 1991](#).

⁶ Luke 21:15

⁷ Pope Francis, [General Audience April 30 2014](#).

⁸ St Augustine's Prayer to the Holy Spirit