

**Rekindling our Life in the Spirit as we return to worship together –  
Solemnity of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Day, May  
30/31, 2020 (Acts 2:1-11, 1Cor 12:3-7, 12-13, John 20:19-23)**

Brothers and sisters, today is indeed a special feast, the third most important feast in the Church's liturgical year. It is a feast that celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Christians which took place on Pentecost Day. The Pentecost Day is a Jewish festival that fell on the fiftieth day after the Passover. On that day, an offering of first fruits was offered to God. This day is celebrated as the feast of the Laity. It is the feast of every believer because by virtue of our baptism and confirmation, we have all received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I welcome all of you back to Church after a long period of break due to the Global Pandemic. In fact, returning to worship together on Pentecost Day is really a good time to rekindle our spiritual growth because the Church is the place where the Holy Spirit started with God's people gathered together in prayer. Our first reading from Acts of the Apostles tells us that God chose the feast of Pentecost Day as the time to send the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, including our mother Mary and others gathered together with them.

The Apostles had gathered in one place praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit. A mighty wind and tongues of fire filled the house and rested on them and they began to speak in the mighty name of Jesus. When they spoke, those who had gathered could understand them in their different languages. This was meant to undo what happened in Genesis about the Tower of Babel, where God confused the language of human beings and they could no longer understand one another. (Genesis 11:7-9) But today at Pentecost, this was undone so much so that the Apostles spoke and human beings from different walks of life with their

different languages could understand. This means that the Holy Spirit is the principal agent of unity. The Holy Spirit brings people together.

We celebrate Pentecost as the birthday of the Universal Church, but I think we also celebrate it as the birthday of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as seen in the gospel. In today's gospel reading from John, Jesus appeared to the disciples in the upper room and breathed the Holy Spirit over them and gave them the commission of reconciling one another. "Receive the Holy Spirit, those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven, those whose sins you retain, they are retained." So, it is also the celebration of the birth of Sacrament of Confession.

Dear friends in Christ, what distinguishes us from others is our life in the Spirit. Living in the Spirit makes us joyful, free and liberated people. Once the apostles received the Holy Spirit, they were transformed from fearful people to courageous people. Their life in the Spirit enabled them to be bold witnesses of Jesus Christ. As St Paul tells us, "For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption." (Rom 8:15)

We just ended the Novena to the Holy Spirit with the celebration of Pentecost. The Novena to the Holy Spirit is the original and oldest novena in the Church instituted by Jesus himself. He told the Apostles to go to Jerusalem and pray for nine days before receiving the Holy Spirit. The novena mentions the seven gifts as Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord. Each and every one of us here has at least one of these gifts of the Holy Spirit. May God animate our gift of the Holy Spirit so that we can have a new Pentecost in the Church. **Amen**

**By Fr. Emmanuel Subaar**