

## Reflection for the Feast of Pentecost

This Sunday, fifty days after Easter Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the birthday of our Church. Today we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and other disciples following the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ. This marks the birth of the Church. Today may we be as excited and filled with joy as when we celebrate our own Birthday or the Birthday of a loved one. Do you remember when you were a child and how excited you got when celebrating your own birthday or the birthday of a friend? Recently at our Monday Coffee with the Padre, it was the birthday of a four-year-old at our Parish. It was wonderful to see the excitement and joy on the young girl's face as we all sang Happy Birthday to her. We should all have that same excitement as we celebrate Pentecost Sunday the Birthday of our Church.

I am sure that all cultures and countries have different ways of celebrating a Birthday, but as we think of the customs that are common here in the United States, we can find ourselves thinking about the greetings of Happy Birthday, the Happy Birthday song and the Birthday cake among other things. I am not suggesting that we sing Happy Birthday to the Church or at coffee and donuts this weekend have a cake with 1,992 candles on it. What I am saying is we should reflect on how we celebrate 1,992<sup>nd</sup> birthday of our Church.

I recently read an article written by Fr. Peter John Cameron OP, this article was part of the Knights of Columbus Veritas Series. In this article written by Fr. Peter he discusses the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the first sentence of this article Fr. Peter states, "All through history, God has revealed Himself as the supreme Gift-Giver. Fr. Peter in the article goes on to state many of the things we take for granted are gifts from God such as creation, life, God's Covenants, the call of Abraham, Moses, and the Jewish People. We can look at God's interaction with the world and His creation, what we see is God, time and again gifting His creation.

The gifts that God gives us are not frivolous gifts they have a purpose and a reason. We can just look at the Seven Sacraments that Jesus Christ gave to the Church. What an amazing gift all Seven Sacraments are, and every Sacrament has a purpose and a reason. They are all grace filled moments that draw us closer to God. On this Feast of Pentecost, we should reflect on the blessing of the Holy Spirit that is given to those who receive Him. Scriptures emphasize two groups of blessings from the Holy Spirit. The first group is the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit. St. Paul in his Letter to the Galatians (Gal 5:22-23) lists these twelve blessings as: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity. We find the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Isaiah 11: 1-3 and they are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. In Fr. Peter's article he points out the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are blessings given to our souls to enhance and refine the natural powers that our souls possess.

The challenge that we have as humans is to use the gifts and talents that God has given us to help the world become a better place, but at the same time being able to recognize and respect God's natural and divine plan for us and the world. This can cause a natural tension within an individual and even within society. Improving the world, we live in and the human condition can and should be in harmony with God's plan.

The Feast of Pentecost is an event that happened on the Jewish Feast of "Shuvout" which is a thanksgiving Feast for the first fruits of the wheat harvest but was later associated with the remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Church's transformation of the Jewish Feast to a Christian Feast was thus related to the belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus was the first fruits of a New Covenant which replaced the Old Covenant of the Law that was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The New Covenant was brought into the world by Jesus to replace the Old Covenant and to bring about a new age and a new hope of salvation to all humanity.

For us today in the year 2025, looking back on 1,992 years of the Catholic Church responding in this world to the calling of Jesus Christ, this Feast of Pentecost connects us with all the faithful who have journeyed in this world following the one true God. Be it the Feast of Pentecost or the Feast of Shuvout we as a faithful people have been reaching out with our talents and gifts to serve the one true God with open hearts and open minds. May we learn from the gifts of Piety, Knowledge, Fortitude, Counsel, Understanding, Wisdom and Fear of the Lord, as we follow God in this world in the company of believers, the Church, looking forward to eternal salvation.