

**First reading Acts 2:1-11**

**‘They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak.’**

When the day of Pentecost arrived, the Apostles were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians — we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.’

**Responsorial Psalm: 104(103):1, 24, 29-34. R30**

**Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul!  
O Lord my God, how great you are!  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your creatures.

You take away their breath, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, and they are created,  
and you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord last for ever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I will rejoice in the Lord.

**Second reading 1 Corinthians 12: 3-7,12-13**

**‘In one Spirit we were all baptised into one body.’**

Brothers and Sisters: No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptised into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

**Sequence**

**Veni, sancte Spiritus**

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,  
From the clear celestial height  
Thy pure beaming radiance give.  
Come, thou Father of the poor,  
Come with treasures which endure;  
Come, thou light of all that live!  
Thou, of all consolers best,  
Thou, the soul’s delightful guest,  
Dost refreshing peace bestow.  
Thou in toil art comfort sweet;  
Pleasant coolness in the heat;  
Solace in the midst of woe.  
Light immortal, light divine,  
Visit thou these hearts of thine,  
And our inmost being fill:  
If thou take thy grace away,  
Nothing pure in man will ;All his good is turned to ill.  
Heal our wounds, our strength renew;  
On our dryness pour thy dew;  
Wash the stains of guilt away:  
Bend the stubborn heart and will;  
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;  
Guide the steps that go astray.  
Thou, on us who evermore  
Thee confess and thee adore,  
With thy sevenfold gifts descend:  
Give us comfort when we die,  
Give us life with thee on high;  
Give us joys that never end.

**Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia, alleluia.** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
**Alleluia.**

**Gospel John 20: 19-23**

**‘As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you. Receive the Holy Spirit.’**

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.’

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**The Spirit who bears fruit**

*In our churches there is no shortage of images, mostly statues, paintings or stained glass. They are mostly images of Jesus, Mary and the saints. There are also images of some Old Testament figures like Abraham and Sarah, or Moses and Miriam. There is a long tradition of images within the church, beginning with the paintings in the Roman Catacombs. The Holy Spirit, whose feast we celebrate on Pentecost, does not lend itself easily to imagery. The traditional image of the dove is drawn from the scene of the baptism of Jesus. But the language in that passage is rather vague; the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, or in the way that a dove might descend. There are two other images of the Holy Spirit in today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Luke says that all who gathered in one room heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven; he goes on to say that something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire. Just as the evangelists do not portray an actual dove at the baptism of Jesus, Luke does not say that the wind and fire at Pentecost were tangible phenomena. The Holy Spirit is impossible to visualise, because the Spirit cannot be seen as such. Yet the Holy Spirit is profoundly real.*

*Many things in our universe are real even though invisible to the naked eye. What we see with our eyes is only a fraction of our physical world. The Holy Spirit belongs to the spiritual world, and it naturally cannot see the Spirit with our eyes. Yet, there are helpful ways of imagining the Holy Spirit. St Paul uses an image drawn from nature when he says that the Spirit bears fruit. He means the visible effect of the Spirit on one's life. We may not be able to see the Holy Spirit, but we can see the effect of the Spirit in our life, just as we cannot see the wind but can see the effect of the wind on people and objects of various kinds. Paul is saying that wherever we find love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control, the Spirit is there at work. The Spirit becomes visible in and through these qualities and virtues. The person who most of all had those qualities was Jesus because he was full of the Holy Spirit, full of the life of God. The Holy Spirit is essentially the very life of God, and that life is a life of love. It is that divine life, that divine love, which was poured out at Pentecost, initially on the first disciples but through them on all who were open to receive this powerful and wonderful gift. Paul expresses it simply in his letter to the Romans, 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us'. It is that Spirit of God's love we have received who bears the rich fruit in our lives that Paul speaks about in today's 2nd Reading. The Spirit is constantly at work in our lives, making us more like Jesus. The ordinary, day to day expressions of goodness and kindness, of faithfulness and self-control, of patience and gentleness, are all manifestations of the Spirit that has been given to us by God. We can recognise the Spirit's presence in the common happenings of everyday life. The spiritual is not something other-worldly; it is humanity at its best.*

*Humanity is at its best in today's first reading. Pentecost brought about a wonderful bonding of people from all over the Roman Empire. They were united in admiring and praising the marvels of God. In spite of differences of language and culture there was a real communion among them. Wherever communion of heart and mind exist among people of different backgrounds, the Holy Spirit is at work. Unity in diversity is the mark of the Spirit. Jesus points out another manifestation of the Spirit: the pursuit of truth. Only the Spirit can lead us to the complete truth. If someone is genuinely seeking for truth, and willing to engage in good works with others, there the Spirit is at work. Fullness of truth and love is always beyond us; but the Spirit is given to lead us towards the complete truth and love, in all its height and depth. [associationofcatholicpriests.ie](http://associationofcatholicpriests.ie)*

**The Centrality of Pentecost**

The NT Apocalypse repeatedly invites (admonishes?) us to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. It was never more urgent. How do we do that and what is the Spirit saying? The feast invites four areas of reflection:

1. The Spirit and the future of the earth (service)
2. The Spirit and the (re)discovery of the Word of God (catechesis)
3. The Spirit and Christian meditation (spirituality)
4. The Spirit and the community of faith, the Church (community)

All four dimensions are connected. What is the church unless grounded in the Word and in the Spirit? What is the church for, unless for the service of all and, especially today, of our threatened world?

(Kieran O'Mahony)

**Feast days this week****Monday 25th May:** Mary Mother of the Church**Tuesday 26th May:** St Philip Neri**Wednesday 27th May:** St Augustine of Canterbury**Thursday 28th May:** Our Lord Jesus Christ the Eternal High Priest**Friday 29th May:** St Paul VI**Saturday 30th May:** Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary**Cycle of Prayer****The Church**

Especially on Pentecost

**Background**

Throughout the Season of Easter the first reading at Mass is taken from the Acts of the Apostles. Luke tells the story of the early Church from the Ascension and Pentecost to the early missions of the apostles.

"When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church." Then "the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through preaching, was begun." As the "convocation" of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them." Catechism 767

"Those who with God's help have welcomed Christ's call and freely responded to it are urged on by love of Christ to proclaim the Good News everywhere in the world. This treasure, received from the apostles, has been faithfully guarded by their successors. All Christ's faithful are called to hand it on from generation to generation, by professing the faith, by living it in fraternal sharing, and by celebrating it in liturgy and prayer." Catechism 3

**Prayer**

*God our Father,  
in all the churches  
scattered throughout the world  
you show forth the one, holy,  
catholic and apostolic Church.  
Through the gospel  
and the eucharist  
bring your people together  
in the Holy Spirit  
and guide us in love.  
Make us a sign of your love  
for all people,  
and help us show forth  
the living presence of Christ  
in the world.*