

Pentecost 2017

Today is Pentecost, the 50th day of Easter. For 50 days we have been celebrating the Lord's resurrection. For 50 days we have entered into the mystery of Christ's new life. But today, on this 50th day, our celebration comes to a climax with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On Easter Sunday, the risen Christ breathed upon his disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," and today—Pentecost—that Spirit comes upon the Church like tongues of fire, empowering the Church to speak to people of every language. For even though the world speaks many languages, the Spirit of the living God is heard in every language, so that everyone can proclaim, to the glory of God the Father, "Jesus Christ is Lord!"

Without the Spirit of God there would be no Church, for it is the Spirit that gathers us as a community of faith and empowers us to call God "Father." It is the Spirit that bestows the gifts that enables the Church to carry out its mission. It is the Spirit that enlightens us to understand the deeper meaning of God's Word so that we can respond in faith, hope, and love. How could the Church live without the gifts the Spirit gives: gifts of healing, teaching; gifts of preaching and administration; gifts of wisdom and understanding. Without the Spirit, there would be no church.

Without the Spirit it is impossible to pray to the living God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ. How could we pray to God without the gift of the Spirit? It

is the Spirit that sustains and empowers our prayer. It is the Spirit that teaches us how to pray. It is the Spirit that prays for us so that we can pray to God. Without the Spirit there is no prayer. Without the Spirit it is impossible to pray to the living God.

Without the Spirit we cannot live a good life. Without the Spirit the desire of the flesh is too strong. Without the Spirit, we will always succumb to the power of Sin. Without the Spirit, we do not know how to follow the way of truth. It is the Spirit that leads us in all truth. It is the Spirit that shows us how to live. It is the Spirit that empowers us to do what is good and pleasing in God's sight. It is the Spirit that enables us to love. Without the Spirit we cannot live a good and moral life.

I see the gifts of the Spirit every day in the parishioners of St. Mary's: gifts that enable you to do extraordinary things. I see the gifts of the Spirit at work in our catechists who teach the young, our extraordinary Eucharistic ministers who administer communion and bring Christ's presence to the home bound. I see the gifts of the Spirit in Deacon Art, in our Lectors who proclaim the Word of God, and the cantors and choir members who sing God's praises. I see the gifts of the Spirit at work in so many parishioners who do ordinary things to make this an extraordinary parish. I see the gifts of the Spirit in this entire assembly whenever we gather to celebrate this Eucharist. For when we are gathered as one, as we are

today, we are united in the body of love by the power of the Spirit that makes us one is Christ.

The Church lives by the power of the Spirit, and as long as the Spirit is present the Church will live. That is why we sing and pray, “Come Holy, Spirit,” for without the Spirit we cannot live. Let this Pentecost be a day for all of us to stir into a flame the power of God’s Spirit in each one of us and in our parish. For when the Spirit of the Living is present, the Church is alive!