

Pentecost Sunday



The day of Pentecost ushered in a new era of salvation history. With the Holy Spirit descending upon the apostles and others, the Church as we know it was born. From this point forward, we witness a profound spiritual awakening take place in the lives of Jesus' disciples. After Jesus ascended into heaven, his promise of sending an Advocate to guide and protect his Church is maintained. We hear in this Sunday's First Reading:

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
they were all in one place together.
And suddenly there came from the sky
a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.
Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.*

This was not the first time something miraculous took place during a spiritual gathering of the apostles. The Spirit has a tendency to be active in such settings. We get to experience the life-changing energy of the Holy Spirit when we gather for meetings and share a common hope rooted in the faith of our savior, Jesus Christ.

Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, founders of modern 12-step recovery, were certainly touched by the Holy Spirit and guided by others. In 1940, Bill was five years sober but fighting depression and accused of being a *dry drunk* by his peers. One day, a man knocked on his door.

"I'm Father Ed Dowling from St. Louis. A Jesuit friend and I have been struck by the similarity of the AA Twelve Steps and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius" (as recorded in the book *The Soul of Sponsorship* by Robert Fitzgerald, S.J.). This began a friendship that formed the spiritual development of 12-step principles and began overlaying them with the Catholic faith. We return to our roots and the life of the early Church when we gather to pray, share openly and honestly with each other, and celebrate our risen Lord through the sacraments.

Much like those gathered at the Feast of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit first descended upon them, we come from different backgrounds and are united in the new life offered by God's mercy. In a way, we speak a united language of recovery and can understand each other's tragedies and triumphs without having to say too much.

Similarly, this Sunday's First Reading from Acts of the Apostles continues:

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?"

Let us share boldly the Good News of our Lord and let the Holy Spirit guide our recovery from the family spiritual disease of addiction. We pray that God awakens us to those who might be companions and fellow disciples along the way. We join our brothers and sisters around the world this weekend to celebrate Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Reflection Questions

- How has the Holy Spirit influenced you and guided your recovery?
- How would you describe the experience and feelings of connecting with others in recovery meetings?
- Who are the fellow disciples and companions walking alongside you on your journey?

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Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Acts 2:1-11

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Gospel: John 20:19-23