

Brothers and sisters, today we are celebrating the solemnity of Pentecost, the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4), the Holy Spirit. Jesus fulfilled his promise to the disciples by sending the Holy Spirit or the Advocate – the Spirit of Truth (Jn.15:26). The celebration of Pentecost brings the Easter season to a close. The Christians celebration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit coincides with the Jewish feast of Weeks, fifty days after Passover, which was a time of prayer for good harvest. Pentecost simply means “fiftieth”, 50th day after Passover (Feast of Weeks). For us, Christians, the 50th day after Easter is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. The feast of the Pentecost is the birthday of the Catholic Church, the day three thousand people were added to the disciples as the result of Peter’s preaching (Acts 2:41). The Holy Spirit brought to the Apostles the light and the strength they needed to preach the gospel. It was astonishing to see Peter, an illiterate person, preaching to the Jews as any theologian would.

The first reading presents an untold change on the disciples and the dramatic descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost brought about more than the disciples could have ever imagined. The Spirit enabled them to speak in languages that everyone could understand and transformed their fears so they were able to proclaim God’s salvation in Jesus Christ with courage, confidence and zeal (Acts 2:4; 11). Luke speaks of fifteen different groups of people, each speaking a different language, who listened to Peter speaking on the day of Pentecost. Peter spoke in Aramaic, but each one present there, heard Peter’s words as if spoke in his own language. Hence, Pentecost restores man to the culture of unity and love (cf. Genesis 11:1-9) not the confusion of Babel. The Holy Spirit brings about a total transformation and overcomes walls and barriers that bring unity and love. Therefore, the gift of the Holy Spirit renews the face of the earth. The Psalms today make this proclamation loud and clear: “you send forth your Spirit...and you renew the face of the earth” (Ps. 103:30). “The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what he means...”(Rom.8:26-27). The Holy Spirit also has been guiding the church right from Pentecost up-to-date, and it may interest you to know that at Mass the Holy Spirit transforms the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Our second reading has given us a way we can live our lives as Christians by given us the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:16, Paul is given a moral guidance by saying: “...live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh”. Some scholars think that the above sentence can be well understood as “if you walk by the Spirit, you will never carry out the desire of the flesh”. Because the Spirit of God is the only agent powerful enough to overcome the desire of the flesh. Paul has listed the accompanying signs of living in the Spirit as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness...self-control (Gal.5:22-23). You can list this fruits of the Holy Spirit on your prayer list as follows: fill me with the fruits of your Spirit, Lord fill me with love, so that I seek to understand and appreciate the rich variety and diversity of life that surrounds me. Fill me with peace, so that I know how to ease those angry and sometimes violent urges that well up inside of me....

My dear friends, I wish to end on a prayerful note. Let us pray individually for the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit saying: God grant me the **Spirit of Wisdom** that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the **Spirit of Understanding** to enlighten my mind with the light of your divine truth; the **Spirit of Counsel** that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining heaven; the **Spirit of Fortitude** that I may bear my cross with you and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the **Spirit of Knowledge** that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the saint; the **Spirit of Piety** that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable; and the Spirit of the **Fear of God** that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and dread in any way to displease God...and animate me in all things with Your Spirit. Amen!