

Pentecost is an ancient feast

In Greek it means *the fiftieth day*

**For the Jews, it commemorated the day the Torah was given to
the Israelites**

It held a connection to the Passover

The day they were freed from the Egyptians

It is also connected to the feast of the harvest

And in this way became one of three traveling feasts

One of three times a year Jews were expected to go to the Temple

**There are other symbols that spoke to the Jewish people as well
God sealed his covenant with Moses by coming down on Mt Sinai**

He was manifested in fire and smoke

An earthquake and loud sounds of a trumpet

The wind reminded them of Genesis

When there was nothing

Until the wind, the '*breath of God*' hovered over the waters

There was the strong wind that opened the Red Sea

And the fire would remind them of the burning bush

When God spoke with Moses

And the tower of fire that led the Israelite people for 40 years

Bringing them to the Promised Land

For Christians, Pentecost should bring all these to mind as well

But it doesn't stop there

It is given additional meaning by the Holy Spirit

Our first reading from Acts occurs at Pentecost

That is why there were so many gathered in Jerusalem

People of every tongue and nation

The disciples are all together as well

They were instructed by Jesus to wait there for the Paraclete

Although they probably had no idea what he was talking about

They knew something would happen

Suddenly they hear a strong wind

Filling the house

Tongues of fire appear above them

They begin to speak in different languages

This was not the charismatic gift of tongues that needs interpreters

This was a powerful work of God

The crowd hears the wind and gathers

And are astounded when they hear the Apostles speak

Because each person hears in their own language

Probably like it was before the tower of Babel fell

When all mankind spoke one language

Human pride caused them to grasp at being gods

They perverted the gift of language

And God confused them by sending many languages

Here he reverses course

The disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, speak

And everyone understands

Our second reading from Corinthians tells us more about the Spirit

We all need Him

For without Him, we cannot even say *'Jesus is Lord;*

Our faith is itself a gift of the Spirit

These gifts of the Spirit are for our salvation

But they are meant for another purpose as well

To build His Church in the world

The Spirit offers many gifts

He feeds our diversity

So we can become one in Christ

In our Gospel, we again have an account of the resurrection

The disciples are all locked up in a room

After witnessing what happened to Jesus

They are afraid of what might happen to them

Jesus is suddenly there in their midst

Although the doors remained closed

Peace be with you

And he shows them his hands and side

Proving he is no ghost

To calm them, he repeats: *Peace be with you*

As the Father has sent me

So I send you

His first call to the disciples was an invitation

Come, follow me

Now it takes a new direction

They are being sent

To continue his mission of bringing the Good News to all the world

And he breathed on them

Receive the Holy Spirit

As the breath of God hovered over the abyss in Genesis

Calling out new creation from nothing

The breath of Christ goes over his disciples

Beginning a new creation within them

This is not the fullness of the Spirit

That would come later

Isn't this how God works in our lives?

In the life of His Church?

At the ordination of a priest or a bishop

There is a line

May God who has begun the good work in you,

Bring it to completion

The Holy Spirit has a multitude of gifts for us

He blows as he wills

These gifts are offered as invitations

They are seedlings

They only grow when we accept them

When we allow the Spirit to water them

When we allow Him to be the warmth that brings growth

The thing that limits these gifts is not the Spirit

It is human beings

We take these gifts

And use them as we desire

God offers His gifts for the building of His Church

He didn't slap down a mature Church

With every doctrine all laid out for us to grasp

He planted a seed

It is His desire that we cooperate with Him

**It was the infant Church that decided what would be in Sacred
Scripture**

It was the infant Church that addressed heresies

**It was the infant Church that set doctrine and dogma
Not so there would never be any more discussion on these points**

But to lay out the groundwork

Ensuring that nothing would ever contradict them

This was the work of the Spirit

This is the work he continues in our lives

His guarantee

And he continues to call, to invite

Although this invitation can take many forms

We may experience it as fire, wind or water

Even these affect us differently

Fire can be a gentle warmth, preparing the soil

It can be like a hot July sun

Scorching the earth

It can be like a forest fire

Burning everything in its path

And preparing for new growth at the same time

It can be like a gentle rain

Softening the earth

It can be like a gully washer
Clearing out what is obsolete or a barrier to the Gospel in our lives
It can be a soft whisper in our ears
Nudging us along
It can be a driving force, like a tornado
Tearing down our false sense of security and self-sufficiency
The idea that we can earn our salvation by what we do
However we experience the Spirit
When we trust in Him
When we pray to him
When we keep open the path of communication with him
He who has been called the soul of our souls will speak
He will lead us on his path
And although it may be a path we would not choose
It may be a path that pushes us out of our comfort zone
It may be a path that seems crazy to the world
It may even be a path that is scandalous to our friends and family
It is a path that we not only follow
It is a path we live
The Holy Spirit is the path that will lead us to Christ
He is the path that will lead us home