

Year A (2026, Pentecost Sunday)

Friends, today is an exciting day because today we celebrate and commemorate **Pentecost Sunday**. Today is not a quiet feast or a polite remembrance. Pentecost is the day **God breaks into the room**.

But before we rush into what happens in Acts 2, we need to remember where the Apostles were just days earlier. In Matthew 28, at the Ascension, after **three years** of walking with Jesus... after His **Crucifixion, Burial, and Resurrection**... after **forty days** of seeing the Risen Lord with their own eyes... last Sunday's Gospel says something astonishing:

"They worshiped Him, but they doubted." (Mt 28:17)

Even after everything — the miracles, the teachings, the empty tomb, the appearances — the Apostles still carried fear, uncertainty, hesitation. They loved Him, but they weren't ready. They believed, but they weren't bold. They worshiped, but they doubted.

And that is exactly the kind of people God chooses to set on fire.

Because by the time we reach Pentecost, those same men are gathered in the Upper Room, not praying for a "nice experience," but praying because they had **nothing left** — no plan, no courage, no idea what to do next.

And then it happened.

A rushing wind. A shaking room. A fire that did not burn but transformed.

The same men who were afraid to open a door suddenly ran into the streets proclaiming Jesus Christ with a boldness the world had never seen. Pentecost is not the story of what *they* received — it is the story of what **God still wants to give**.

First, let us get some history on Pentecost.

In the Jewish faith, Pentecost is called **Shavuot**, the Feast of Weeks — a celebration of the first fruits and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. This comes fifty days after Passover, Israel gathered in Jerusalem to offer the first and best of their harvest, thanking God for His covenant and His Word.

Shavuot remembers the moment when God formed His people by giving them the Law — when Israel became a nation shaped not by power or politics but by **God's voice**. It was a feast of gratitude, covenant, and mission. It is also one of the three "feasts of assembly", with Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles being the other two.

And it is precisely on that feast, with Jerusalem filled with pilgrims from every nation, that the Holy Spirit descends in Acts 2. The same God who once wrote His Law on tablets of stone now writes His law on **human hearts**.

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The first fruits offered in the Temple become the first fruits of the Church, as three thousand are baptized that day. As Shavuot marked the birth of Israel's covenant identity, Pentecost marks the birth of the Church and its **missionary identity**.

The Law given at Mount Sinai becomes the Word proclaimed in every language, and the fire that once rested on a mountain now rests on the heads of ordinary disciples. There are no coincidences in the Bible. This is why we should read and study it.

Pentecost is the fulfillment of Shavuot — God forming a people, sending them out, and making the whole world His harvest.

The Holy Spirit Comes Like Fire. And fire purifies. Fire changes whatever it touches. Fire spreads.

If we ask the Holy Spirit to come, we must be ready for Him to **change us** — not just comfort us or inspire us, but transform us. The Church does not need more “nice” Christians. It needs **Spirit-filled disciples** who burn with the desire to do God's will.

As Christians, we are built for mission and each of us are given gifts by the Holy Spirit to carry out the mission of the Kingdom of God. Saint Paul tells us that the Spirit gives gifts “for some benefit” — not for our ego, not for our comfort, but for the **mission**.

Our gifts are not ornamental. Our gifts are tools in the hands of God.

Some of us have the gift of compassion. Some have the gift of teaching. Some have the gift of courage. Some have the gift of prayer.

But the Holy Spirit does not give gifts so we can admire them. He gives gifts so we can **use** them — not for our glory, but for the glory of God.

Imagine what our parish would look like if every person here said:

“Holy Spirit, use me. I want to do Your will. I want to be set on fire.”

In the Gospel, Jesus breathes on the Apostles and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” But He does not stop there.

“As the Father has sent Me, so I send you.”

The Spirit is not given so we can stay stagnant. The Spirit is given so we can **go** — into our families, our workplaces, our communities, and into the world.

The Spirit is not a decoration for the Church. He is the **engine** of the Church.

The Holy Spirit fills the space we give Him. If we give Him five minutes, He will fill five minutes. If we give Him our whole heart, He will set it on fire.

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We do not celebrate Pentecost because it is a memory of something that happened to people 2000 years ago. We celebrate it because it is a **promise**, a promise even for us today.

The same Spirit that rushed upon the Apostles — the same Spirit who turned doubters into martyrs, the hesitant into heralds, the fearful into fearless — is ready to rush into our lives if we dare to ask.

A Parish on Fire. What would happen if today every one of us prayed with sincerity:

“Come, Holy Spirit. I want Your fire. I want Your will. I want Your mission. Do in me what You did in the Apostles.”

What would happen if our parish became a place where the Holy Spirit is not just welcomed, but **wanted**? Where people walk in and feel the Spirit moving? Where gifts are awakened? Where courage is born? Where forgiveness flows? Where mission explodes?

This is Pentecost. This is the Church. This is what the Holy Spirit wants to do — **today**.

Remember: The Holy Spirit comes to those who are ready to surrender and use the gifts He has given to us.

Come, Holy Spirit! Set our hearts on fire! Amen.

Typical, at the end of the homily, I will say the priestly blessing of Aaron found at the end of Numbers chapter 6, but today is different. So I will say this:

May the fire of Pentecost rest upon you.

May the Spirit ignite your gifts, strengthen your heart,

and make you brave in love, bold in faith,

and joyful in the mission God has entrusted to you. In Jesus' Name, Amen