

Pentecost Sunday, May 24, 2026

There was a scene in a well-known Christmas movie from the late 1980s, which will remain anonymous because I don't necessarily want to give it an endorsement. In the scene the main character has been anticipating this big Christmas bonus from his employer, and it doesn't come, and it doesn't come and it doesn't come. Finally, a messenger arrives at the door with an envelope. And he thinks, sure, that this is the big bonus. It turns out to be a 12-month subscription to the Jelly of the Month Club. He had been planning to put it in a swimming pool with the money from the bonus. So, huge disappointment. But his cousin is there. He's a little bit off, we will say. His comment is, "It's the gift that keeps on giving." [laughter].

The Holy Spirit, I think you could say, is in a circumstance the gift that keeps on giving, but not only the gift that keeps on giving, the gift that keeps on being given. Some gifts we receive once, and they continue to bear fruit. Some gifts we can receive once and that is it, the gift is complete. But the gift of the Holy Spirit, it is a gift that keeps on bearing fruit in our life, but also, the Holy Spirit continues to be poured out upon us. It is a gift that God continually gives those who are open to it.

There are many images that are used when referring to the Holy Spirit. One of them, of course, is fire. We think of fire as something very dynamic, right? And fire by its very nature, spreads. Hopefully, we won't see too much of that this summer in our territory here, so we know very well that the nature of fire is to spread wherever there is fuel and oxygen. But it grows by its very nature. And sometimes you want more fire. If you are just trying to start a campfire, you're

feeding the fire more oxygen because you want more and more of that flame. You have more of that heat, more of that consuming power.

Or also the image of water is used for the Holy Spirit. Like a fountain that springs up from the earth it just keeps on flowing. And we know what it's like to be very, very thirsty - how good it feels, that thirst. But that's very much like this Spirit, too. We have thirst, we long for God. We are not satisfied with one good drink. You might keep going back to that fountain and drinking more and more of it.

And of course, there is the image for the Holy Spirit of breath or wind - breathing. And we know very well, as they say, you don't just take one big breath and then you're good for your whole life. You have to keep on breathing and sometimes, sometimes you just want a really good, deep breath. You have more, more of that good, fresh air or perhaps there is a particular scent associated with water. I have an orchid in the rectory that blooms every once in a while, and interestingly, it's only fragrant at night. Sometimes I'll be in the living room and I can smell it from the other room. So, I'll go over there and take a good, deep whiff of it, you know; just a good deep breath.

I think one of the reasons that the Holy Spirit is given as a gift, continuously, is that as human beings, we change slowly. If you pour water on a plant whose soil is just dry, dry, dry a lot of that water is going to run off. So, you don't just dump it in all at once and expect that the plant is going to be watered. Instead you pour the water slowly so that the soil has time to absorb what is being given. And you then really nourish the plant. So, it is with us. We're slow to change as human beings, generally. Some people may, you know,

make pronounced changes all at once and stick with it, but generally we know that we gradually change. We grow gradually. You don't go from, twenty-one and a half inches long at birth to six feet tall in the course of a month. It takes time to change and grow gradually.

So that is one of the reasons that the Holy Spirit is given over time and in a repeated fashion. But I think one of the other really important reasons that the Holy Spirit is given to us over and over, and we're refreshing that Spirit over the course of a lifetime, is that we want to know we have more. We don't just want to receive this gift of God once a day and say, "Ah, yes, I have received all I need and I'm content now for the rest of my life." No, the Holy Spirit is actually working us. He's stirring up a deeper desire for God. So, we want more of God! We want more of that fire! We want more of that water! We want more of that deep breath! And each day we live our faith that desire goes stronger and deeper. So, the fact that the Holy Spirit is so dynamic and can be poured out more and more and deeper into our hearts, is God's answer to that desire in us. He doesn't just give the Holy Spirit on our Baptism, and then because we're growing and wanting more and more of divine life, he is not going to say "But I already gave you that gift. So be happy with what you got." No, he is pouring his love out to our hearts. As St. Paul says, "We receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our heart, we receive the love of God, poured out into our hearts from the Holy Spirit." (Romans, Chapter 5).

So, we want more of God. We want more of God. And thankfully, he wants more of u, right? He wants us to receive us more and more. God's greatest desire for each one of us is that our life will be totally transformed by this gift of the Holy Spirit. And he does give us one-

time gifts – gifts in a certain moment that will bear fruit. For example, going to Confession. In that moment, your sins are forgiven. That's a gift from God. And if you take that grace of this Sacrament and really receive it well and let it be fruitful, it will continue to bear fruit in a life of ongoing conversion.

But you don't go to Confession just once. I have been hearing First Confessions recently and I tell them that the goal of the First Confession is a second confession. This is just sort of a fun side story, but there was a child in a previous parish who was counting the number of times she had come to Confession. "Father, this is my 7th confession." I told her that the first time you say, "This is my first confession" but after that, you just say how long it has been since your last confession. Can you imagine saying "Bless me Father, this is my 748th confession." [laughter]

But you see how some gifts from God are for in an instant, for that moment and even though it may bear fruit, it's not an ongoing grace. But the Holy Spirit is poured out every time you say, "Come, Holy Spirit" inviting the Spirit of God into our heart anew. Not that he was there and left, and we need him to come in and replace that hole. No, our capacity is expanding. That desire for God that you experience in your heart, that's a capacity for God. And he is the one that is stretching that and deepening that. And he wants to be the one, he is only one who can satisfy that while at the same time stretching us even more.

So, on Pentecost Sunday, we want to realize what a great gift it is that we receive the Holy Spirit poured out into our hearts. At the moment of our Baptism, we became truly a dwelling place of God,

the Holy Spirit. But on this day, we don't want to just relegate that gift of the Holy Spirit, that experience of having received him, to a single instance, so recognize that the Holy Spirit is a gift from God and is dynamic, and ongoing so that as we're growing in our desire for God, he's absolutely ready to satisfy it and increase it.

He continues to work in the Church. He continues to work with the Church in mysterious ways. So, it is not only when you're praying at home, "Come Holy Spirit" from the beginning of each day and for many times throughout the day but also, when the assembly is gathered, the work of this Church as an institution. Just to give you one example, how and I am not reflecting on my own preaching at all. I'm saying that sometimes after that, someone will come up and say, "What you said about such and such in the homily was just what I needed to hear." And I'm thinking I said that? I'm pretty sure I didn't say that. But there's the Holy Spirit somehow seriously using a faulted preacher to communicate the Word of God. To communicate something of his love and mercy to the person who had come to receive.

So, let us sort of stand in awe of the gift of the Holy Spirit and open our hearts to receive a new outpouring. Even today. Today, and tomorrow. I'm pretty sure Pentecost used to be celebrated with an Octave. So, let us celebrate an Octave of Pentecost.

Just keep praying for that outpouring of the Holy Spirit – an increase of that desire for God. You want God. We want the goodness of God, the love of God. The peace and the joy of everything that God wants to do. We open our hearts to you and say, "Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. Today, tomorrow, and always."