

# LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 37: May 5– 12

## Solemnity of the Ascension of Our Lord and the Holy Spirit

The Ascension is when Jesus ascended into heaven and told his followers that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

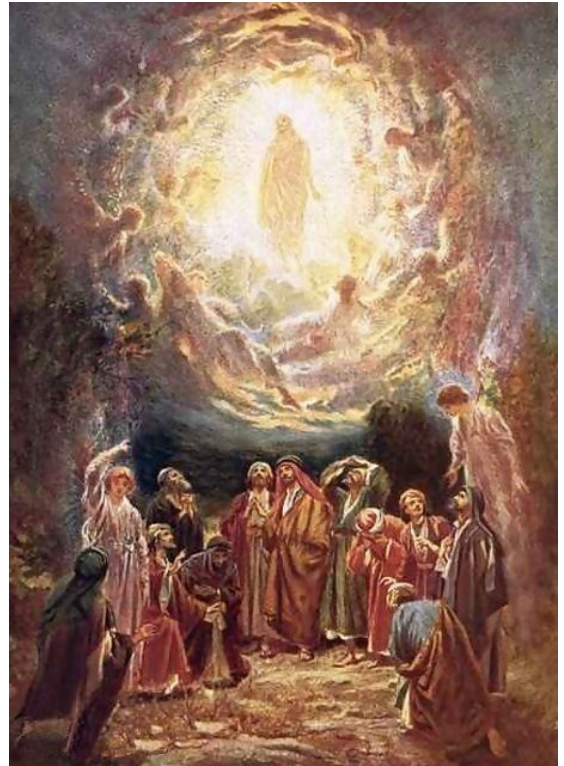
We know from the Acts of the Apostles that after His Resurrection, Jesus spent forty days instructing his followers. “To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Since Easter is always on a Sunday the Ascension always lands on a Thursday. The Ascension is a universal feast in the Church and is a Holy Day of Obligation. However, the celebration for us is moved to the 7th Sunday of Easter (the 12th).

### The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is one of the Three Persons of the Trinity, who exists as the communication and personification of the mutual, flowing, and never-ending relationship of love and unity between God the Father and God the Son. And through our Baptism and Confirmation, the Holy Spirit comes down to dwell in us. And if the Holy Spirit is inside of us, and the Holy Spirit is part of the flowing relationship of the Trinity, we are part of that loving relationship between God the Father and Jesus, in such a meaningful way! This love, if we are willing to accept it, slowly changes and transforms our mind and soul to be more aware and accepting of the incredible love of God. As Pope Benedict XVI once advised, “Let us invoke the Holy Spirit: he is the artisan of God’s works. Let his gifts shape you!”

### The Power of the Holy Spirit

Receiving the Holy Spirit as mentioned changes us. Just think about the Apostles. They spent years living with Jesus- listening to him teach day in and day out. Witnessing countless miracles and learning from His example, and they still didn’t get it. What happened when Jesus was going through his Passion? Ten of the eleven remaining disciples ran, hid away and some tried to return to fishing. But the men in the Acts of the Apostles are bold, fearless, wise and noble. They advance the message of Christianity throughout the world through great adversity and most faced martyrdom. What happened? The Holy Spirit, that’s what. The Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost and completely fills the hearts of Mary and the Apostles and what was impossible becomes possible. This happens too in our confirmation.



## Holy Spirit Novena

How did they prepare to receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? With the very first Novena. Per Jesus' direction, Mary, the Apostles, the holy women and other disciples went to Jerusalem for nine days and devoted themselves to prayer (Acts 1:14).

We can imitate them with a **Novena to the Holy Spirit**, prayed from the Friday after the Ascension through the Saturday before Pentecost. It was instituted by Jesus, practiced by Mary and the Apostles, and officially decreed by Pope Leo XIII in 1897.

There are different versions of the Novena available. I always find the [Pray More Novenas](#) accessible. Each day asks for a different **Fruit of the Holy Spirit**. It takes a few minutes to pray each day. You can sign up online to receive daily email reminders. Or, I have started setting an alarm on my phone. Each time I pray a Novena, I seem to get too confident on day five and then end up missing. Setting a phone alarm has helped with this!

## The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1830-1832)

The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: "charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."

## Other Ways to Celebrate

Since Jesus ascended to heaven from "the mount called Olivet," it is a good day to climb a mountain and have a picnic. We don't have a mountain but anywhere can do really. Take the time to meditate on God.

Kite Flying

Eating Cloud-like food. This could be Meringues, popovers or something like that!



DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

See AFC Website for  
Digital Version

