

Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21.

1Corinthians 12:

John 20:19-23 (John 7:37-39)

Today we celebrate the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost comes from the Greek word Pentekostos. Pentekostos comes from Pente and means 'a fiftieth part'. The festival was therefore observed on the 50th day from the Paschal feast which we refer to as 'Easter'. Pentecost is a harvest festival and is the second largest of the Jewish festivals.

The disciples were in Jerusalem celebrating the festival, but God had the disciples there for a reason. Here are some instances which allude to the spirit's endowment on the day of Pentecost:

- God had spoken through the Old Testament prophet Joel saying, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people."
- John the Baptist predicted that Jesus would baptize with 'fire and the Holy Spirit'.
- Jesus promised, "If I go, I will send the counselor to you."
- Jesus also said, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth."
- He also said, "Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

It was significant that God chose Jerusalem to make manifest, the third person of the Trinity (the holy Spirit). The temple was in Jerusalem. Therefore, Jews from different nations converged on the city to offer sacrifices in the temple, to attend festivals, pay temple tax and engage in trade and commerce.

The 12 apostles were in a room (there were 12 because Matthias had replaced Judas who betrayed Jesus and later committed suicide). There were also 108 other disciples present. Then without any warning, a sound like a violent wind came from heaven and filled the entire room. Wind is significant in scripture. In Greek, there is only one word designated for wind, spirit and breath; pneuma. Therefore, God's Spirit, breath, his authentic, mighty wind filled up every space. There was not even an air pocket, evident.

The nature of God's Spirit is immutable (never changes) but the manifestation can be in any way God chooses.

- On the Day of Pentecost the manifestation of the Spirit was strong loud and powerful.
- During creation, and on the evening of the resurrection the Holy Spirit was calm.

The disciples saw what looked like divided tongues of fire alighting on each person's head. Immediately the Spirit empowered them with the gift of glossolalia. St Luke, the writer to Acts, states that all the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave the ability.

It was beneficial for visitors to hear the disciples' message from God in their own language. This way they were able to disseminate the good news when they returned to their own regions. The action of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost filled the disciples, enabled them to exercise their gift, embolden them and inspired the visitors to Jerusalem who later became the evangelists because they went back home spreading the message of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. They also shared what they heard from the witness of the disciples.

At our baptism we were given the Spirit's endowment. At our confirmation it was confirmed in the presence of the church community that we have the Spirit and we were then ready to take on our duties as Christians in the church.

On the eve of Jesus's resurrection, he endowed the disciples in a regenerative way. On the Day of Pentecost, they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Notice that these took place in the context of community. Notice also that the movement was sacramental. The outward and physical signs were the divided tongues of fire and the sound. The inward and spiritual grace is the seal of God's spirit, which empowers us with our different gifts and represents God's **via charis**, God's mean of grace.