

P E N T E C O S T

ORIGIN/OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

The English word "*Pentecost*" is a transliteration of the Greek word *pentekostos*, which means "fifty." It comes from the ancient Christian expression *pentekoste hemera*, which means "fiftieth day."

In Old Testament times, *Pentecost* was an prominent, one day ancient Jewish festival that took place fifty days after the *Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover*. This event drew people from many nations back to Jerusalem. It was known by several names that derive from its meaning and timing. Also known as the *Feast of Harvest* ([Exodus 23:16](#)), it represents the first fruits ([Numbers 28:26-31](#)) gathered as the result of the labor of those who completed the spring grain harvests in ancient Israel. It is also called the *Feast of Weeks* ([Exodus 34:22](#); [Leviticus 23:15-22](#); [Deuteronomy 16:9-12, 16](#)), with this name coming from the seven weeks plus one day (50 days in all) that are counted to determine when to celebrate this particular festival.

NEW TESTAMENT REFERENCES

New Testament references to Pentecost can be explored in [Acts 2:1-41](#), [20:16](#) and [1 Corinthians 16:8](#).

Before and during the preachings and teachings of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth, there was no "Church" to speak of. They preached to their respective followers in the open land and private homes, often traveling from one place to another so that the Good News of repentance and salvation could be heard by all who had ears to hear. Before the earthly Ministry of Jesus took root, thousands came to John at the Jordan River to be baptized by him.

During His Ministry, Jesus foretold the coming of the [Holy Spirit](#) (Advocate, Helper, etc) on many occasions ([Luke 24:49](#); [John 7:37-39](#); [John 14:16](#); [John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#); [John 16:7](#); [Acts 1:4-5](#); [Acts 1:8](#)), often telling His followers that He would have to depart (ascend) from them prior to the Holy Spirit being sent.

When the resurrected Christ appeared in the Upper Room before the fearful disciples, He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" ([John 20:22](#)). There was a purpose for them to receive this power, which Jesus proclaimed when saying, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" ([John 20:21](#)). Jesus was preparing them for discipleship. He was equipping them with the Holy Spirit before sending them out to perform what is now the Essential Mission of the Catholic Church ([Evangelii Nuntiandi 14](#))-to [evangelize](#) the world by spreading His Good News.

Ten days after the Ascension of Jesus Christ and fifty days after His Resurrection, the Holy Spirit descended upon about 120 followers of "The Way." After the Holy Spirit was unleashed and the peoples of many lands were astonished that they could understand one another in their native tongues ([Acts 2:1-12](#)), there were also those that scoffed at the notion that God had made this happen, saying the people were just drunk on cheap wine ([Acts 2:13](#)). Peter then rose and delivered his famous proclamation (*kerygma*) to all present ([Acts 2:14-36](#)), in which he exhorted that an Old Testament prophecy ([Joel 3:1-5](#)) had just been fulfilled in their presence (see also [Psalms 104:30](#)). Those who believed the message Peter was delivering were baptized and 3000 souls were added that day ([Acts 2:41](#)).

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WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO US PRESENT DAY?

~ IT'S NOT JUST A DAY TO WEAR RED TO CHURCH ~

Pentecost symbolizes *a new beginning*. It celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit unto the whole Earth and the empowering of the Catholic Church to reach the world with the gospel of our Lord. In celebrating Pentecost, the Church expresses its gratitude for the faithfulness of Christ in fulfilling His promise to send "another Advocate" ([John 14:16](#)); celebrates the work of Holy Spirit in renewing all of creation; professes its confidence and security in knowing the Spirit's power is available for its Mission; and grows in awareness of the immensity of its calling to reach the world with the Gospel.

From the day of Pentecost onward, all Catholics have been called to the full-time task of proclaiming "*the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light*" ([1 Peter 2:9](#)). This is, by no means, a 'part-time' job, as this is about life and death and where *we choose* to spend eternity. Active & practicing Catholics beyond junior high school received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation. This empowers us, as Scripture calls the Church to "equip the holy ones (saints) for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" ([Ephesians 4:11-12](#)).

That's us. We are the holy ones. We are to go forward and do something with the Spiritual gifts that have been bestowed upon us by God Himself. We can't keep them if we don't share them. Evangelization is not for those who *choose* to do it. All Catholics are called to spread the Holy Gospel in word and deed to all nations, as it is the "*essential mission of the Church*" which "*exists to evangelize*" as it "*is her deepest identity*" (Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI, 5³¹⁹).

We have been chosen by God. We received the Living Water at Baptism. When receiving First Communion, we were infused with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. We were then given years of doctrinal education. We were anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, which was not a catechetical graduation - but a personal pledge to, henceforth, be a servant of Christ for the remainder of our lives. When we actively utilize the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, it gives God the honor and glory He so richly deserves. We are using presents that He gave us to use.

In closing, the above can be summarized in a personal manner to proclaim the calling for *every Catholic* who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation, as set forth by our very own faith doctrine ([CCC #1302](#)): "*It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost.*" Amen!

Present day, we may not often witness the gale force winds and tongues of fire that fell upon the first followers of Jesus 2000 years ago in Jerusalem. The Good News is that the same Holy Spirit is available to us today and every day, if and when we choose to allow it to work within us. [Romans 8:11](#) tells us, "If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you." Amen!

The traditional color for Pentecost is red, reflecting the flames that came with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as described in [Acts 2:3](#). Consider wearing red to worship each Pentecost Sunday to celebrate the empowering of the Church at the sending of God's Spirit! Let's not stop there. Let all of us then boldly go forth and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all the world ([Matthew 28:19-20](#))!

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A CALL TO ACTION: GET OUT OF THE HUDDLE

AND GO DEEP FOR, WITH AND INTO OUR LORD JESUS

Monsignor Charles Pope of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., always seizes the opportunity to deliver a Holy Spirit-led homily packed with zeal and enthusiasm. We are all blessed to hear the Good News being preached with such conviction! Amen!

Visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3BFqc_12K9k&feature=player_embedded to check out a Pentecost homily excerpt from Msgr. Pope (or just click [HERE](#) if you are online).

Msgr. Pope's [BLOG](http://blog.adw.org/author/cpope/) (<http://blog.adw.org/author/cpope/>), a daily spiritual exploration for many of our faithful, is a Holy Spirit-charged treasure of wisdom, knowledge and grace that quenches the thirst and hunger of readers seeking truth while personally (yet gently with love) challenging them at the same time.

The resources included herein are reservoirs of Joy for anyone desiring to hear our Faith shared with abundant life ([John 10:10](#))!

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Symbols of the Holy Spirit (Fire), [696](#)

Rejoice, you who are full of grace, [726](#)

Pentecost, [731-732](#);

The Holy Spirit– God's Gift, [733-736](#)

The Holy Spirit and the Church, [737-741](#)

The Church revealed by the Spirit, [767](#)

The Sacramental economy, [1076](#)

Confirmation in the economy of salvation, [1287-1288](#)

Effects of confirmation, [1302](#)

Day of outpouring of the Holy Spirit, [2623](#)

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