

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES TO US AMIDST OUR CHALLENGES
& THAT IS WHY WE CONTINUE TO WALK TOGETHER IN HOPE

Pentecost Sunday – 28 May 2023



The Holy Spirit comes to us amidst our challenges
& that is why we can continue to walk together in hope.

Pentecostés by the artist El Greco (1597) | public domain

When I was on the one-year pastoral internship at St. Mary's Beaudesert, I was obsessed with improving my English speaking skills as early as possible, hoping to confidently reflect on Mass. For this reason, I habitually said, 'I am sorry that my English speaking is not good.' One day, a parishioner approached me to say, 'We all can understand what you say as you speak in the language of God.' Her comment struck me as I had only thought about my capability or competence. I gained courage from her and kept in mind that everything I would do would be in God's hands. Since her encouragement, I have been focusing on conveying God's words to all through my heart, rather than focusing on my English speaking skills."

On Pentecost Day, we remember the descent of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes down from above. Yet, how does the arrival of the Holy Spirit relate to our lives? Pentecost appears to simply mark the end of the Easter season. It is during Pentecost that we obviously conclude the Easter season. At the same time, we begin a new journey with the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. In all new beginnings, we hold 'courage.' For instance, Olympic athletes always have courage before the start of a game. A new prime minister begins to execute their ministry with courage. In other words, it is natural for us to be afraid and worried at a new beginning.

The Word of God draws us to listen to two stories: the story of the Holy Spirit's arrival in the first reading and the story of Jesus's appearance to the disciples in the gospel, respectively.

These stories begin with the nature of worry. The first reading shows that the people in the gathering heard a powerful sound, which may have scared them. If a loud noise or alarm goes off in our vicinity, we may become surprised or worried. The people in the house in the first reading were chained by fear and worry, feeling lost since Jesus ascended into heaven. The Holy Spirit did not arrive at the house in quietness or silence, nor did the Spirit remove noise or loud sounds. The Voice of the Holy Spirit was heard amidst fear, worry, turmoil, and any other kinds of negativity. The voice of Jesus, saying 'Peace be with you!' spread to the disciples who were affected by a sense of meaninglessness and worry due to the loss of their hope. However, what the Holy Spirit did was give courage to the people in the house. Last year, Pope Francis stated that the Holy Spirit is the one who helps us keep our memory of God and God's love, which makes us feel secure. The Spirit tells us, 'You are a son or daughter of God! Stay strong and confident, as God has confidence in you!' Today, we recall the delight we experienced during the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Mass, celebrating God's glory. The memory of the Easter Joy gives us courage. During the Easter Vigil Mass, we were told, 'Do not be afraid!' Today, Jesus tells us through the disciples, 'Peace be with you!' Ultimately, our celebration of the arrival of the Holy Spirit reflects the arrival of the risen Christ, which fills us with joy and grants us courage.

Brothers and sisters, what we are witnessing here now is that when the Holy Spirit came down to the disciples, none of them were afraid of their weaknesses, and none of them were sensitive to the differences that existed among them. They focused on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were transformed by the Spirit and confidently moved forward, which marked the birth of the Church. We have different voices on various matters, including those in the Parliament. We have different blueprints for the future of our country. But what we can do together is gather at the point of the arrival of the Holy Spirit and encourage one another. Therefore, let us express our joy of unity in our own ways, whether it be through the Rosary Prayer, St. Vincent de Paul, the Women's Prayer Group, the Senior Group, the Youth Group, and so on.

Let us walk together towards the Holy Spirit.

Deacon Minje Kim

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/052823-Day.cfm>