

Family Prayer

Pentecost

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We acknowledge the First Nations peoples as the first inhabitants of the nation and the traditional custodians of the lands where we live, learn and work. We pay our respect to the Elders past, present, and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of First Nations peoples across the nation. We acknowledge the deep spiritual attachment and relationship of First Nations peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

Context - Pentecost

Pentecost is a significant feast in the Christian liturgical calendar, often regarded as the "birthday" of the Church. [i] It commemorates the moment when the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus' disciples, empowering them to proclaim the Gospel and baptise believers. Initially, the disciples understood their mission as directed towards their Jewish community, but under the influence of the Spirit, they gradually recognised their calling to bring the message of Christ to all peoples, marking the Church's emergence as distinct from Judaism. [ii]

Pentecost holds a central place in Christian tradition, alongside Easter, Christmas, the Epiphany, and the Ascension. The liturgical colour of Pentecost is red, reminiscent of the tongues of fire of Acts 2:3. [iii] This feast not only celebrates the Spirit's arrival but also affirms the Church's universal mission to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. The first reading on Pentecost Sunday is always from Acts 2, recounting this transformative event.



Scripture

Scripture: Acts 2: 1 - 4 [iv]

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Figure 1: Depiction of the Pentecost, illuminated page from Sacramentary manuscript, 11th century. Photograph. Encyclopædia Britannica ImageQuest, Accessed June 9, 2025. https://quest.eb.com/images/126_157252.

Reflection

Pentecost marks the moment when the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples, filling them with courage and purpose. For the disciples, “the Holy Spirit overcomes their fear, shatters their inner chains, heals their wounds, anoints them with strength and grants them the courage to go out to all and to proclaim God’s mighty works.”[v] The Spirit propelled the disciples beyond their familiar boundaries, opening their hearts to a mission that would extend to all nations and peoples. This has been the mission of the Church over the past 2000 years, and just the Holy Spirit called Jesus’ first disciples, we too are called to continue this mission, “not just in our own places but throughout the world.”[vi]

In Pope Leo XIV’s Homily during the Holy Mass on the Solemnity of Pentecost, he reflected on ways that the Holy Spirit opens borders in our hearts, in our relationships with others, and between peoples. He reminds us that the Holy Spirit is still at work today, challenging us to confront isolation and individualism.[vii]

Whilst it may be easy to remain focused inwardly on our own lives, Pentecost is a reminder that we are called to something greater – a mission of reconciliation, dialogue, and inclusion. “The Spirit unifies people who would never before have associated with one another – Jews and Gentiles, slaves and prominent people, the upright and the formerly impious – to share a common life of brotherhood and sisterhood in the Church.”[viii] The Spirit breaks down the walls in our hearts, inviting us to embrace others with openness and hospitality, ensuring that no one is left out of God’s love.

Pentecost serves as an invitation to live this mission in daily life, fostering a community where the Spirit is alive and active. A life shaped by love, forgiveness, and generosity strengthens bonds and deepens faith, creating spaces where kindness and reconciliation flourish. Encouraging children to embrace courage and step beyond their comfort zones helps them grow in their commitment to service, empowering them to uplift and support those in need. The Church fully embodies Pentecost “...if there are no borders or divisions among us; if we are able to dialogue and accept one another in the Church, and to reconcile our diversities; and if, as Church, we become a welcoming and hospitable place for all.”[ix]

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit,
did instruct the hearts of the faithful,
grant that by the same Holy Spirit
we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations,
Through Christ Our Lord,

Amen.[x]

Call to Action

- Reach out to someone in need: Pentecost is a call to mission – find a way to support a neighbour, a local charity, or someone going through a difficult time.
- Write letters of encouragement: Share God’s love by sending notes to those who might need uplifting.
- Learn about different cultures: Pentecost reminds us that the Gospel is for all peoples—explore languages, traditions, or prayers from diverse communities.
- Talk about being open to the Spirit’s movement: Share ways in which your family can be more attentive to God’s guidance.

Call to Action

[i] National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC). The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-12. Accessed 9 June, 2025. <https://ncec.catholic.edu.au/faith/scripture-resources/commentaries/acts-21-12/>

[ii] NCEC. The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-12.

[iii] NCEC, The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-12.

[iv] Acts 2:1-13 “The Coming of the Holy Spirit.” Bible Gateway, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. Division of Christian Education on the National Council of the Churches of Christ. Accessed 9 June, 2025.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202&version=NRSVCE>

[v] Leo XIV. “Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost.” Vatican.va. Accessed 9 June, 2025.

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/homilies/2025/documents/20250608-omelia-pentecoste.html>

[vi] NCEC, The Coming of the Holy Spirit – Acts 2:1-12.

[vii] [1] Leo XIV. “Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost.”

[viii] Hart, Sarah. “Reflections on the Readings of Sundays and Feasts.” The Australasian Catholic Record 102, no. 2 (January 2025): [231].

[ix] [1] Leo XIV. “Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost.”

[x] Catholic Online. Come Holy Spirit. Accessed 9 June, 2025. <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=331>