

Along side Christmas and Easter, the Feast of Pentecost is one of the three most important celebrations in the Church's liturgical year. We celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to be with us always.

The **Holy Spirit** descended upon the Apostles and Our Blessed Mother 50 days after Christ's own resurrection and not long after His Ascension into heaven. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit is given to each one of us at our **Baptism**- infused into the very depths of our beings. He immediately sets to work to unite us with Christ and give us His seven gifts – like seeds to be nurtured by our parents, who that day, promised to form us in faith.

In fact, He is at work in all the sacraments helping us to grow closer to our loving Father. He prompts us to seek out the Sacrament of **Reconciliation** and the priest calls down the Holy Spirit when he lowers his hands over the wine and bread (in a gesture called the 'epiclesis'), in the celebration of the **Eucharist**. Signifying the **Holy Spirit**, the sweet smelling oil of Chrism is used by the Bishop to strengthen the Gifts of the Holy Spirit at **Confirmation**, to anoint the palms of a priest in the Sacrament of **Holy Orders** and by the priest to heal **the Sick**.



Pentecost is a time to pray especially to the Holy Spirit to stir our hearts to help us grow closer to Jesus so as to be able to imitate Him more closely.

The **Gifts of the Holy Spirit** make us receptive (docile) to the promptings of the Holy Spirit but He needs our cooperation.

**The Gift of Knowledge** helps a person to discern between what leads to God and what separates us from Him (i.e. putting a desire for material possessions, power or pleasure ahead of one's desire to love and serve God).

The **Gift of Understanding** helps us to grow in understanding of our faith (Holy Scripture, Tradition and magisterial documents) and to see God's goodness and work in our daily lives.

The **Gift of Wisdom** helps us choose God's plan for each of us and to imitate Christ in our daily living.

The **gift of Fortitude/Courage** gives us the strength to be 'a soldier for Christ' and to stay close to God when faced with difficulty or challenges.

The **gift of Counsel** is a guiding force to help us make good decisions that help us grow closer to Jesus.

The **gift of Reverence** guides us to worship God, our loving Father through the Holy Spirit through our prayers. Our presence at Sunday Mass and our gestures (i.e. when we enter the Church and attentiveness during Mass) reflect our heartfelt love for the Lord.

**The gift of Awe and Wonder** is sometimes described as Fear of the Lord yet we aren't intended to be afraid of our Creator, God. Looking around us, the beauty of our world and the gift of human life are just two reasons to be moved by God's goodness.