

This week is the end of the Easter Season with Pentecost Sunday. So this week's reflection will be on Pentecost and what it means for us as Catholics. As parents it is so important that your children are taught about your faith. This is the promise that as parents we made when our children were Baptized. As we do not have the classroom setting currently, you as parents are you children's teachers.

First here are some facts regarding Pentecost. **Pentecost** literally means 50<sup>th</sup>. It is a feast celebrated on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Passover feast by the Jews, and it is a feast celebrated on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus by the Christians. This feast ranks high among the great feasts of Christianity. Today is the birth of the Church, of all those who have been reborn in Christ Mystical Body. It is the memorial of the day the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary in the form of fiery tongues which took place 50 days after the Resurrection of Jesus.

Pentecost is the day when the Holy Spirit comes from heaven like a rushing wind. It's full of symbolism... flame, wind, water, the dove

The Liturgical Color of Pentecost Is Red. This is based on the original Pentecost and the Holy Spirit appearing as flames. In my experience as a lifelong Catholics, Pentecost is the biggest day where Catholics try to actually wear the liturgical color to Mass. Expect to see plenty of people wearing red.

Just like we gather for important occasions like birthdays, anniversaries and holidays is a very biblical concept. God instructed His people to come together several times a year, knowing it was good for them to be reminded of what mattered most in life. Today we do the same without realizing we are following an ancient pattern when we gather to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, the anniversary of His resurrection and His ascension, and other important events.

Pentecost was one of the three feasts where the Israelites were commanded to gather together, so this Sunday as you gather for church and lunch or dinner, here are four ideas for how to mark this important occasion with your family.

1. In the Old Testament one practice for the feast of Pentecost was for the priest to wave two loaves of bread in the temple before God in thanksgiving for the early harvest. Though the Jews did not see the symbolism, the two loaves represented two groups of people God planned to harvest for His kingdom: His chosen people the Jews and everyone else called the Gentiles. This Sunday, for lunch after church or for dinner that night, you might buy two loaves of bread to imitate the original practice. Give thanks that God's gift of redemption is for all who are willing to receive it.

2. Create a simple obstacle course in your living room or back yard. Blindfold a volunteer who then has to find their way across the room or yard by listening to your voice calling directions; turn right, stop, take two steps left, etc. The blindfolded one has to listen carefully to your voice or he will trip or bump into things. Then talk about how this is like listening to the Holy Spirit's voice. To further illustrate this, send another person through the obstacle course and instruct other family members to call directions at the same time. This teaches a very practical lesson on learning to follow one voice as opposed to many other "voices" that might influence our lives.

3. Read one or two of these verses about who the Spirit is and what He came to do: John 14:16,17; John 14:26; John 16:7, 13-15. You might make a list from these verses about what the Spirit will do for us. If you have older children and teens, this can become a very in depth and beneficial discussion as you find other verses beyond these three learning together how vital is the Holy Spirit and His gracious work in our lives.

4. Then read Ephesians 5:17-19 and talk about this command that Paul wrote to everyone who is a Christian. What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Why does God command this? How does being controlled by God's Spirit make a difference in your life, or how should it make a difference?

My hope that adding even one of these ideas to your Sunday this week will help you appreciate the wonder of God actually residing within each of us who believe in Him. It also can help you give your children a beginning level of understanding of this vital truth. May you enjoy Pentecost Sunday as you celebrate the miracle of God's continual presence with us.

I have also found some great activities that you can do as families to celebrate Pentecost. Consider making a windsock or fly a kite to make a connection between wind and spirit. Consider the children make a ribbon mobile. Have the children time the ribbon to the dove and have them represent a prayer for someone they say prayers for

One of the significant parts of the Pentecost story is that people who spoke different languages were able to understand one another. Take that idea and learn something in a different language together as a family.

Make a red velvet cake-Remember the color of Pentecost is Red and who doesn't love a red velvet cake

I would also like to share a prayer that you as families can say this Sunday. After finding this it is a pray fitting for this time.



*For all whose day starts with anxiety,  
as they leave the security of home  
worrying about the risk of infection;  
particularly those whose health  
or age classifies them as vulnerable.  
Loving God, be close, keep them safe,  
along with all whose tasks today  
include the care of frail and elderly.  
And for all of us, grant wisdom  
to make sensible choices, not just  
for ourselves, but for everybody.*

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*Help us to put aside  
preconceptions  
about other people,  
because that alters  
our behaviour,  
and simply accept  
that they, like us,  
are precious in your eyes.*

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*Loving God, we give thanks  
for the extended family  
of local communities  
assisting with the needs  
of both frail and elderly  
confined to their homes.  
May every gift of love,  
every encouraging word,  
bring hope into lonely lives  
and a blessing to the giver.*

In my email earlier this week, the Diocese of Syracuse is allowing Parishes to recommence Masses this Pentecost Sunday. As I had indicated, Father will be saying Masses in the parking lots of the Parishes. Should any family wish to attend, everyone must stay in their cars and wear a mask. No one can come out of the car. At the time of Eucharist, it will be brought individually to each car. If attending I would recommend that your family please go to the USCCB website to find the Sunday reading and responses.

As I noted that the Diocese has noted that the Faithful are still dispensed from Sunday obligation to attend Mass until further notice. All families are encouraged to view the Mass on their TV or computers should you as a family are able to attend at our parishes.

Also attached is some additional information from the Office of Catechesis on Pentecost Sunday and the Month of the Sacred Heart.

On a final note, I am requesting that you all please keep in your prayers our First Communion children and Confirmation Students. This was to be a special month for them with the Communion children making their 2nd Sacrament of initiation and the Confirmation students the 3rd Sacrament of Initiation in their Catholic Faith. Hopefully soon we are able to celebrate these Sacraments soon.

Again, I remain committed to all of the Families of Sacred Heart/St Mary's and St. Patrick's/St Anthony's. You may call me at any time with questions.

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