

PENTECOST

Pentecost Sunday is one of the most ancient feasts of the Church, celebrated early enough to be mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (20:16) and St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (16:8). It is the 50th day after Easter (if we count both Easter and Pentecost), and it supplants the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which took place 50 days after the Passover and which celebrated the sealing of the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai.

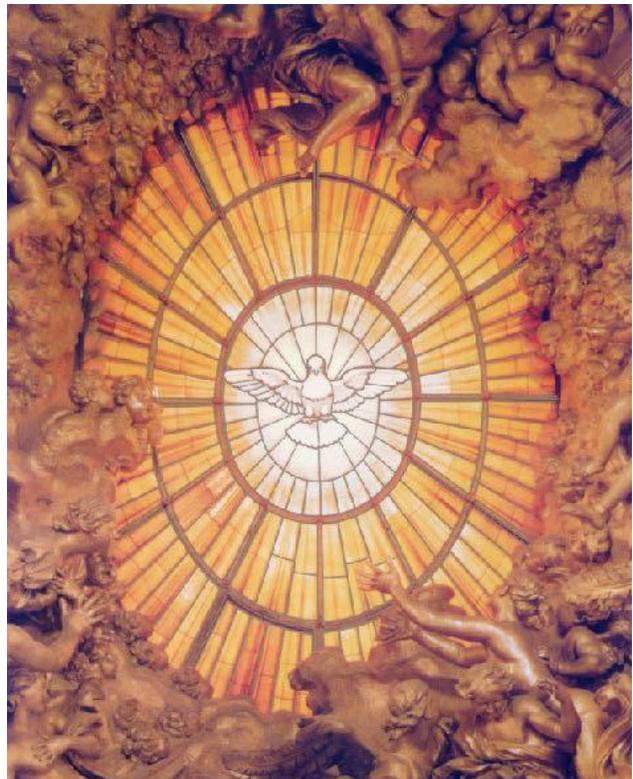
The Acts of the Apostles recounts the story of the original Pentecost as well (Acts 2). Jews from all over were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish feast. On that Sunday, ten days after our Lord's Ascension, the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary were gathered in the Upper Room, where they had seen Christ after His Resurrection:

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with diverse tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak (Acts 2:2-4)."

Christ had promised His Apostles that He would send His Holy Spirit, and on Pentecost they were granted the gifts of the Spirit. The Apostles began to preach the Gospel in all of the languages that the Jews who were gathered there spoke, and about 3,000 people were converted and baptized that day.

That is why Pentecost is often called "the birthday of the Church." On this day, with the descent of the Holy Spirit, Christ's mission is completed, and the New Covenant is inaugurated. It's interesting to note that St. Peter, the first pope, was already the leader and spokesman for the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday (see Acts 2:14ff).

In years past, Pentecost was celebrated with greater solemnity than it is today. In fact, the entire period between Easter and Pentecost Sunday was known as Pentecost (and it still is called Pentecost in the Eastern churches, both Catholic and Orthodox). During those 50 days, both fasting and kneeling were strictly forbidden, because this period was supposed to give us a foretaste of the life of Heaven. In more recent times, parishes celebrated the approach of Pentecost with the public recitation of the Novena to the Holy Ghost.



By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Christ's Paschal Mystery was brought to its completion. The Holy Spirit prepares us with his grace in order to draw us to Christ. He manifests the risen Lord to us, opening our minds. He makes present the mystery of Christ. And he reconciles us, bringing us into communion with God. Saint Thomas Aquinas says that the Holy Spirit interiorly perfects our spirit, communicating to it a new dynamism so that it refrains from evil for love. With the Holy Spirit within us, "it is quite natural for people who had been absorbed by the things of this world to become entirely otherworldly in outlook, and for cowards to become people of great courage."

-Saint Cyril of Alexandria

ROSARY DURING THE MONTH OF MAY

As a child did you ever fight with your siblings or friends? Do you remember how your parents responded? I'll bet their responses to your disagreements with siblings still effect you to this day. They probably impact the way you parent or deal with conflict. Now you probably know that there is a bunch of tension in the public sphere right now. Even among family, friends and loved ones, there is tension arising from differences in how we react to all that has and is happening.

From Our Mother Mary's viewpoint and perspective this tension among people is the same as when we fought or struggled with family when we were young. We are all her little children and how badly she wishes to reconcile and bring peace to her children. She desires us to see in others and in ourselves children who need the comfort of a mother because life is hard right now. A mother always consoles her child even if what they are upset about or hurt by is "silly" or "childish." Mary is the same way. We are all her children.

Take this opportunity to again renew that loving and intimate relationship with your Mother by praying the Rosary everyday. If you are signed up for our REMIND messages you have been receiving a daily reminder at 12:00 noon to 'pray your Rosary.' I hope you find this a useful reminders we all make our own individual efforts to pray every day and yet this is something we can all do together.

"When needed, Mary provides for the defense and salvation of her children extraordinary graces and wonderful miracles. What wonders have caused, sustained, spread everywhere, a confidence among Christian people! What striking proofs of her protection the Church recalls to our memory in solemn feasts and devout practices, enriched by precious indulgences! What titles Christians give her to testify to their gratitude, 'Help of Christians, health of the sick, comfort of the afflicted, refuge of sinners, gate of heaven, our life, our sweetness, our hope!' What a multitude of people gather to the places where she is most honored, where she obtains the most assistance to those who call on her! What prayers and acts of thanksgiving are offered at the foot of her altars! In our days, what conquests have been made by Our Lady of Victories! What favors have been bestowed on all hearts devoted to the heart of Mary!"

— St. Ignatius of Loyola

REOPENING

As the nation begins to reemerge from the stay at home orders we are faced with new challenges. The reopening of our churches must be done with a balance of caution for the safety of our parishioners and the wider community as well as a reverence and respect for the proper celebration of the Sacraments. This first step in reopening of our parish comes from the bishop.

Funeral Masses in church may be celebrated. However, a maximum of ten (10) people may attend (with face masks), with **no** distribution of Holy Communion or Sign of Peace.

Baptisms are permitted to be scheduled: 10 people maximum in attendance.

Weddings have the same limitation of attendance.

Confessions may be scheduled again. This is no change other than an announcement. I have been hearing confessions every Saturday and Sunday while the church has been open. See me and ask me.

Public Mass: We are only “permitted” to celebrate public Mass with 10 people (including priest) maximum according to both New York State and the Diocese. This requirement is clearly unworkable in any Catholic parish. “Parking lot” Masses pose many logistical and technical problems. The Diocese has directed that even if such Masses were to be celebrated at this time, **NO** distribution of Holy Communion would be possible as it stands now.

As the Bishop’s directives allow individual pastors leeway to make prudential decisions for each parish, I have decided that for the time being we will not be celebrating public Masses given these conditions here in St. Elizabeth’s until or unless conditions become more manageable and practical.

Please bear in mind that the Obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is still dispensed and not binding at this time.

“Have patience with all things, but chiefly have patience with yourself. Do not lose courage in considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them, every day begin the task anew.”

— St. Francis de Sales

THE CHURCH IS AND HAS BEEN OPEN

As a reminder, the church has been open for private prayer since the lockdown began. Tuesday through Friday we are open from 830AM to 1230PM; Saturday from 4:00PM to 5:30PM and Sunday from 830AM to 11:30AM. We are closed for cleaning on Monday.

Thank you to our ushers who are there to open doors and provide a safe environment. Don't be afraid to come. It's probably the safest place you can visit since very few people come by and we clean everyday.

“Whenever I go to the chapel, I put myself in the presence of our good Lord, and I say to Him, ‘Lord, here I am. Tell me what You would have me do.’ If He gives me some task, I am content and I thank Him. If He gives me nothing, I still thank Him since I do not deserve to receive anything more than that. And then, I tell God everything that is in my heart. I tell Him about my pains and my joys, and then I listen. If you listen, God will also speak to you, for with the good Lord, you have to both speak and listen. God always speaks to you when you approach Him plainly and simply.”

— St. Catherine Laboure

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Taken from *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Alphonsus Liguori. Published by Tan Books.

PRAYER TO END THE PANDEMIC

Holy Virgin of Guadalupe, Queen of the Angels and Mother of the Americas, we fly to you today as your beloved children. We ask you to intercede for us with your Son, as you did at the wedding in Cana.

Pray for us, loving Mother, and gain for our nation and world, and for all our families and loved ones, the protection of your holy angels, that we may be spared the worst of this illness. For those already afflicted, we ask you to obtain the grace of healing and deliverance. Hear the cries of those who are vulnerable and fearful, wipe away their tears and help them to trust. In this time of trial and testing, teach all of us in the Church to love one another and to be patient and kind. Help us to bring the peace of Jesus to our land and to our hearts.

We come to you with confidence, knowing that you truly are our compassionate mother, health of the sick and cause of our joy. Shelter us under the mantle of your protection, keep us in the embrace of your arms, help us always to know the love of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR DURING THE PANDEMIC

O clement, O loving, O sweet Mother Mary,
We, your children of every nation,
Turn to you in this pandemic.
Our troubles are numerous; our fears are great.
Grant that we might deposit them at your feet,
Take refuge in your Immaculate Heart,
And obtain peace, healing, rescue,
And timely help in all our needs.
You are our Mother.
Pray for us to your Son.
Amen.

SURRENDER TO THE WILL OF GOD

The following quote comes from a very powerful prayer, the *Novena of Surrender to the Will of God* composed by Father Don Dolindo Ruotolo † 1882-1970. There is a link to it on our website under the “Prayers” tab.

You see evil growing instead of weakening?

Do not worry,

Close your eyes and say to me with faith:

“Thy will be done, You take care of it.”

I say to you that I will take care of it,
and that I will intervene as does a doctor
and I will accomplish miracles when they are needed.

Do you see that the sick person is getting worse?

Do not be upset, but close your eyes and say

“You take care of it.”

I say to you that I will take care of it,
and that there is no medicine more powerful
than my loving intervention.

By my love, I promise this to you.

