

**Homily Notes Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2020**  
**Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23**  
**On the Holy Spirit see, CCC – 683-747, 1091-1112.**

**1. What is Pentecost** ("the fiftieth [day]")? It is the Greek name for Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks, a prominent feast in the calendar of ancient Israel, an harvest festival which also involved celebrating the giving of the Law on Sinai, fifty days after leaving Egypt. Later, in the Christian liturgical year, it became a feast commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ (120 in all), as described in the Acts of the Apostles 2:1–31.

**2. What happened on Pentecost?** 1) The Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary as fiery tongues. 2) The frightened apostles were transformed into fiery preachers and evangelizers by a special anointing of the Holy Spirit. 3) The audience, from all over the Roman Empire, experienced an anointing of speech (hearing) by the Holy Spirit with the gift of tongues, hearing Peter speaking in their languages. 4) The early Christians became powerful witnesses and brave martyrs for the faith.

**3. Key doctrine: Who is the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is not a dove nor any kind of bird. To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and the Son, "that with the Father and the Son, receives the same adoration and glory as the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit truly is God. He leads us to the truth, then convicts us of our sins to make us holy and then He sends us out to share the Good News of New Life in Christ. See CCC ## 683-747, especially ## 712, 736, 799-801, 1845.

**Scripture Readings:**

**4. First reading:** The Acts of the Apostles tells us the story of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were united together praying with Mary, but immobilized by fear. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, they gained courage to begin their public preaching. The gift of speaking in various tongues shows how the presence of the Holy Spirit overcomes linguistic and cultural divisions caused by the Tower of Babel. This may be seen as a miracle of speech or of hearing.

**5. Second Reading:** This selection from 1 Cor 12 shows us that God gives us spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit. These gifts, found in several of St Paul's letters, in the New Testament, are usually called "charisms" (Greek for gifts). There are approximately 27 such gifts identified as coming from the Holy Spirit. No one has all the gifts, but we have all been given some gifts in order to build up the ministry of the Church. Here these gifts are not for personal advantage but are given to build up the Church, not to divide but to build up the entire body. We should learn what our gifts are. See C. Peter Wagner's book, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow: How to find your gifts and use them to bless others.*

**6. The special "charism" manifested on Pentecost Day was the ability to speak in tongues.** This gift has been and is still manifest within the Church today. It is associated with the "Charismatic Movement" in the Catholic Church and with "Pentecostals" in the Protestant churches. Groups like this can be most powerful in overcoming serious sins, especially those of abuse and addiction. For St Paul, to promote division within the Church is a mortal sin (See Gal 5:16-22.).

**7. The Gospel** presents Jesus to us as he conferred the Gift of the Holy Spirit on his Apostles on the night of His Resurrection. This gift was to promote peace among them. Therefore, with this gift he also gave the power to forgive sins. To "forgive" sins includes guidance, correction, and discipline. Note here that the Apostles may either remit (forgive) or retain (not to forgive). Let us notice how basic it is to overcome sins and their guilt. Can you have freedom from anxiety and conflicts in relationships without this?

**8. Notice especially in the Communion Rite in the Liturgy of the Eucharist the promise of peace and freedom from anxiety.** This is especially dependent upon the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives outside of Mass. But is it not also dependent upon us repenting of our sins and living in righteousness, justice and love? I have copied some of these references in the notes on the electronic version. Can this

peace be present among us if we are caught up in sins? It is possible only if we repent of our sin, thereby being freed from its effects.

**9. How does the preparation for Eucharist make this possible?** We must not receive the Eucharist if we have mortal sins on our soul. Hence, we must examine ourselves before every Mass, and if we find serious sin, go to confession with a priest before receiving the Eucharist. This makes every Eucharist a time of personal examination and renewal.

**10. But let us return to the topic of “spiritual gifts.”** It was in the Gospel that Jesus gave the gift of forgiving sins to the Apostles. This they passed on to the Bishops and through the Bishops to the Priests. But there are also gifts given to all the baptized. St. Paul lists many. In the very passage that we read, in the verses skipped over, St. Paul identifies some of the charisms.

“To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.”

There are a number of passages in which St. Paul lists spiritual gifts (charisms) which are given to the Baptized. Our job is to identify and develop the gifts we have been given. Other passages which list gifts include Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and others. See C. Peter Wagner, “Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help your Church Grow”, pp. 53-54. There are more or less about 27 different spiritual gifts identified explicitly by St. Paul.

**11. Why is it important to identify and develop our spiritual gifts?** St. Paul has said that we should use our gifts to benefit the whole church, not just ourselves. This is the purpose of our stewardship program. We want everyone to contribute together to build up the ministry of Jesus Christ here at St. Boniface.

### **A series of questions to ask ourselves**

**12. What can happen if we don’t identify our gifts?** We could believe that we don’t have any gifts. Some people can be very discouraged and feel badly about themselves because they wrongly believe they have no gifts. Furthermore, without knowing the gifts the Lord has given us, we could not be able to help build up Jesus’s ministry.

**13. What would a church be like if everyone knew their gifts and developed them?** Can you imagine the energy, dynamism and effectiveness of a community like this would be?

**14. What do we want to happen here at St. Boniface?** Wouldn’t identifying our gifts and using them in the Church be “Living in the Spirit?” How might identifying these gifts help us to help others?

**15. Do you think God would be pleased with us if we did this faithfully?**

**16. How might he bless us if we did this faithfully?**

Language from the Communion Rite which is dependent on our repentance and our behavior.

“Deliver us, Lord from every evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming...”

“Lord Jesus, you said to your apostles: I leave you peace, my peace I give you...”

“The peace of the Lord be with you always.” “And also with you (with your spirit)”.

“Let us offer each other the sign of peace.”

“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: grant us peace.”

Then at the elevation: “This is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.”

“Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed (from sin).”