

# A Reflection from Fr. Canisius for the Solemnity of Pentecost

**Dear Parishioners,**

Today is a great feast. It is one of the solemnities – a feast day of the highest ranking – of the Church year. This is the feast of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. It is a joyous celebration, with special colors and music. We give praise and sing, *Come, Holy Spirit, Come!*, as we recall the story of Pentecost and the power of the Holy Spirit in our Church and world.

As recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit descends on the Apostles appearing as tongues of fire and with the sound of a driving wind. The Spirit empowers the Twelve to speak the native languages of all those gathered. It says later in this same chapter that about 3,000 people are baptized and given new life in the Spirit that day (2:41), and from here the community grows. We celebrate this as the beginning of the Church, borne by the Spirit into the world.

The Spirit has a history of giving life. The Spirit is the mighty wind that swept over the waters at creation. It is the breath of God that gave life to Adam. The Spirit anointed Israel's kings and spoke through the prophets. By the power of the Spirit, Jesus was born of Mary. The Spirit descends on Jesus at his baptism and remains with him throughout his ministry.

The Spirit not only gives life, but renews life. The Holy Spirit has given us life, and given life to the Church. But we are not perfect; like the disciples we will always be in need of healing and comfort. Thus, the Spirit continues to be poured out upon us, to heal our wounds and give us strength anew. With every intercession the Spirit makes on our behalf, with every word of Jesus the Spirit reminds us of, and with every sacrament in which we participate, we are renewed. With new life in the Spirit, we are able to go forth to love and serve the Lord. The Holy Spirit supports and sustains us, empowering us with gifts for the good of the Church.

Thank you for celebrating the different ways in which the Spirit is manifested in our community and in each one of us. We are the Body of Christ. Let us together rejoice in the Spirit and proclaim the Good News boldly.

May God's peace be with you in the week ahead!

~ *Fr. Canisius*