

Pentecost Sunday – Year A (2026)

You know, I thought it would never happen to me. I was convinced that it only happened to other people. I never liked it when I saw it in others, and now I see it more and more in myself.

With each passing day, it gets more and more evident. You see, as I get older, I get more and more set in my ways.

You know what I'm talking about. I get up and go to bed at the same time every day. I watch the same television shows. I shop at the same grocery store, and every time I go to McDonald's, I always order the same thing.

Now, you may recognize some of that in yourself. I'm sure you know people who fit that description.

Today, we celebrate the third most important feast in the Church's liturgical calendar. It is a holy feast we call Pentecost—the complete opposite of being “set in one's ways.”

It is a most joyous day when we raise our voices and lift up our hearts in praise of the Holy Spirit, whose very essence is manifested in change, transformation, risk-taking, spontaneity, and new life.

The Holy Spirit: the Paraclete, the Consoler, the Spirit of Truth is revealed in fire, wind, and water— true God— dwelling in and working through the hearts, minds, and souls of his people.

But it doesn't always feel this way, does it? Most of us have a hard time recognizing the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

Every time I answer the phone and the Bishop invites me to take up a new assignment, I always ask myself, "Is this the work of the Holy Spirit?" Usually, I get my answer a few hours after I arrive at my new parish!

The Holy Spirit never gives up. The Holy Spirit desperately wants to renew us, transform us, strengthen us, and make us the best versions of ourselves.

Pentecost is the feast that reminds us that God refuses to let us stay comfortable.

The disciples, after all, had settled into something like what I just described. They were together in one place. They knew one another. They had their routines. They stayed behind closed doors. In many ways, they were *set in their ways*— frozen not just by habit, but by fear.

And then the Holy Spirit comes. Not gently. Not politely. Not in a way that lets them keep everything exactly as it was.

He comes like a strong, driving wind. Like fire. Like something that disrupts everything familiar.

And suddenly, those same disciples who were content to stay inside... are out in the streets. Those who spoke one language are now speaking many. Those who were afraid are now bold.

Pentecost is God's answer to that tendency we all have—to settle, to narrow, to cling to the familiar.

Because here's the truth: being "set in our ways" isn't just about habits like what we eat or what we watch. It can become something deeper.

We can become set in how we think, in how we love, in who we include and who we leave out, even in how we imagine God at work in our world.

And the Holy Spirit comes to break that open.

- The Spirit pushes us beyond ourselves.
- The Spirit sends us where we would not choose to go.
- The Spirit invites us into something new, something larger, something we cannot fully control.

That can be uncomfortable. Because routines feel safe. Predictable lives feel safe. Familiar patterns feel safe.

But Pentecost reminds us: the Christian life is not about security—it's about transformation. It's about being constantly renewed, constantly called, constantly sent.

So maybe the question for us today is this:

- Where have I become too comfortable?
- Where have I become closed off, predictable, resistant to change?
- Where might the Holy Spirit be trying to move in my life—trying to stir things up, trying to lead me somewhere new?

Because the same Spirit that rushed into that room long ago. That same Spirit is still at work today. Not to leave us as we are, but to set our hearts on fire for our Catholic faith.

And so often we just want to be left alone, remain the same, at peace in our comfort zone— clinging to the same ideas, rationalizing the same prejudices, turning our backs on the same people.

In many ways, the Holy Spirit wants to turn our lives upside-down, just as he did for those early followers of Jesus.

But it's not going to happen by accident. And it's certainly not going to happen if we are spiritually set in our ways, in a spiritual "rut", for lack of a better term.

In our spiritual lives, let us refuse to be set in our ways – "because as they say, there are no shortcuts to any place worth going."

