



Solemnity of Pentecost

Date: Sunday, June 8, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Acts 2:1–11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 104:1, 24, 29–31, 34 | **Response:** Psalm 104:30

Second Reading: Romans 8:8–17

Gospel Acclamation: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love

Gospel Reading: John 14:15–16, 23b–26

Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

Today, on the Solemnity of Pentecost, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit, an event that transformed a small group of disciples into a dynamic, world-changing Church.

In the first reading from Acts, we are told that when the Spirit descended upon the apostles, they were not left unchanged. A mighty wind filled the house, tongues of fire rested upon them, and they began to speak in other languages. It was a great mystery, a moment of divine intervention that transcended the limitations of human understanding and capability. This moment echoes the Old Testament story of the Tower of Babel, where human pride and division created confusion and discord. But at Pentecost, the opposite occurs: the Spirit unites people, bringing clarity and understanding. The gift of tongues is not about division, but about a communion that transcends barriers—language, culture, and race. This event marks the birth of the Church, and it is not just the apostles who are affected; the entire world is invited to hear the Good News in a language they can understand.

This transformative event speaks to us today as it speaks of the possibility for a radically inclusive community. In the Spirit, there is no separation between rich and poor, between the powerful and the powerless. There is no longer a division between races or nations. The Spirit blows where it will, uniting us as one people of God, giving us the strength to work for justice, to stand with the marginalized, and to bring peace in a world so often torn apart by division.

The Psalmist, in Psalm 104, calls us to praise the Creator, who, by the breath of his Spirit, gives life to the earth. “When you send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth.” In the same way that God created the world from the breath of his Spirit, the Church is created and renewed by the Spirit. The renewal that we long for in our world—renewal of hearts, minds, and systems—comes through the action of the Spirit within us. In our own lives, we are invited to ask ourselves: are we allowing this renewal to happen in us? Are we open to the transforming presence of the Spirit, or are we resisting it, caught in the comfort of the status quo?

In the Second Reading from Romans, Paul speaks of the life of the Spirit, which leads us not into fear, but into the adoption as children of God. “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons and daughters of God,” Paul writes. The Spirit frees us from the fear that holds us captive, that stifles our capacity to act with love and mercy in the world. It is the same Spirit that empowered the apostles to step out into the streets and speak of God’s love in a way that was immediately understood, a way that transcended all human barriers. Paul speaks of a life led by the Spirit as one that brings us into a deeper relationship with God, a relationship where we know we are beloved, no longer enslaved to fear, but free to live and love as God intends.

And then we come to the Gospel of John, where Jesus promises the coming of the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, who will teach us everything and remind us of all that Jesus has said. In the midst of Jesus’ departure, he reassures his disciples that they will not be left alone. The Spirit will be with them, guiding them into all truth, leading them into the fullness of love and communion. The Spirit, as Jesus tells us, will enable us to love as he has loved, to live in union with the Father and Son. It is a call to a deeper and more intimate relationship with God, one that doesn’t just reside in our minds but moves our hearts, propelling us into action.

What does all of this mean for us today? It means that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not a distant, abstract reality. It is a present and active power, one that lives within each of us. It is a gift we must cultivate, allowing it to transform not just our own hearts but the world around us. Just as the Spirit moved at Pentecost to form the Church as a radically inclusive community, so too must we, in the power of the Spirit, work to heal divisions, to bring justice, and to advocate for those whose voices are silenced by poverty, injustice, or marginalization.

In Zambia today, we are reminded that the call of Pentecost to build community is more urgent than ever. The marginalized, the poor, and the oppressed are often those who experience the most profound isolation. Yet, it is precisely these voices that the Spirit calls us to hear, to embrace, and to lift up. Catholic Social Teaching calls us to respect the dignity of every human person, to work toward a more just society where the rights and needs of the poor are given due attention. Pentecost challenges us to embody these teachings, to allow the Spirit to move in our hearts so that we might work for the flourishing of all people, regardless of their station in life.

The Spirit moves us to action. It calls us not just to believe in the possibility of a better world but to work for it, with faith and hope, knowing that God is with us. Pope Francis often reminded us that the Spirit unites us, bringing together our differences in a shared vision of love and justice. We are called to reflect on how we can be instruments of that unity, reaching out to the marginalized, advocating for the voiceless, and working for peace in our communities.

As we conclude, let us ask ourselves the following questions:

- How can I open myself more fully to the Holy Spirit in my daily life, allowing it to transform my heart and actions?
- In what ways can I be an advocate for the marginalized and the poor, especially in the context of Zambia today?
- What is one concrete action I can take this week to build unity and understanding in my community, reflecting the inclusiveness of Pentecost?

May the Spirit guide us as we seek to live the Easter Season with renewed hearts, embracing the call to love, to serve, and to work for justice in the world.

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.