

Faith in Five – Adults
Pentecost, The Holy Spirit & Sacrament of Confirmation
June 3, 2022

- 1. What is Pentecost?** Pentecost Sunday marks 50 days after Jesus' resurrection from the dead and the end of the Easter season. Prior to His Ascension, Jesus instructs the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit; the Comforter would not be sent unless Jesus left first. He tells them to stay in Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Father, where they would be "baptized with the Holy Spirit". They would receive power to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (John 20:22; Acts 1: 4-5, 8). Pentecost is regarded as the birthday of the Church because it was after receiving the Holy Spirit that the apostles began to establish the Church and spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Pentecost has roots in Jewish tradition. Pentecost is a Jewish feast celebrated 50 days after Passover, also known as the Feast of Weeks. The Jewish faithful would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the thanksgiving feast, celebrating the first harvest of grain.

- 2. In the nine days between the Feast of the Ascension and Pentecost, the disciples along with Mother Mary stayed in the upper room devoting themselves to prayer (Acts 1:13-14). This is often considered to be the first or original novena.**

The Holy Spirit novena is the oldest, and only officially approved novena of the Catholic Church. The prayers directed to the Holy Spirit are appropriately used to prepare for Pentecost but may be recited anytime. Each of the nine days focuses on one of the 9 fruits or virtues of the Holy Spirit. In addition to invoking the Holy Spirit, the prayers are used to increase in us the fruits of charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and goodness. To learn more about the novena: <https://www.praymorenovenas.com/novena-to-the-holy-spirit>

- 3. What happened on Pentecost Day?** There were devout Jews from every nation with the disciples and Mary in the upper room. A sound of strong wind came through; flames of fire appeared and rested on each one of them. The disciples found themselves speaking in other languages they never learned but the native speakers could understand. The promise of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled; God poured out His Spirit upon the faithful and to all those who would later believe (Acts 2:5-7; Joel 2:28-32).

The symbols of fire, dove and wind are associated with Pentecost. The color red is representative of the Holy Spirit, or tongues of fire. At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit of God descended like a dove on Him (Matt 3 :16). The Holy Spirit is depicted as a dove in images of the Trinity. The word for Spirit in Hebrew and Greek is the same word for wind or breath. "A mighty wind" played a role in creation (Genesis 1:2) and at Pentecost, God breathed life into the creation of the Church.

- 4. Who is the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Trinity, with the Father and the Son. He is the Lord and the Giver of life. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be faithful, effective witnesses for Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8).

Jesus tells us that the Holy Spirit is our Counselor, Advocate and Comforter who will be with us forever. He dwells in us and will be with us. The Holy Spirit will teach us all things and bring remembrance to all Jesus taught, revealing all things from God. The Holy Spirit will convict the world of sin, guide us to the truth and glorify Christ (John 14-16).

5. **What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?** It is the sacrament where Catholics receive the Holy Spirit, given to us by grace. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit allows us to become soldiers of Christ – deeply rooted in Him to live and defend our faith for the glory of God. At the Sacrament of Confirmation, we are given the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
6. **What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?** The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit according to Catholic Tradition are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude (courage and strength), knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. These sanctifying gifts enable us to love and know God more deeply, strengthening our faith through obedience in His will. Through grace, we grow in holiness. When we use these gifts, we will bear much fruit.
7. **What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?** There are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit according to St. Paul: love, joy, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). These are acknowledged in modern day Bibles.

Catholic Tradition recognizes twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit in the Vulgate, the Latin authority of the Bible and official text for the Roman Catholic Church. St. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin in the late 4th century. He outlined twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit which included these three along with the nine - longsuffering, modesty, and chastity (purity; respect for oneself and others).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1832) states, “The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory”. The fruits of the Spirit are borne out of our love and obedience to God. Jesus says every good tree bears good fruit and every bad tree bears bad fruit (Matthew 7:17). When we walk by the Spirit, we will live by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26).

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