



“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.”

Pentecost officially is the birthday of the Church. And who is the Church? We are the church. So, it's our birthday. Acts of the Apostles (2:1-11) gives the description of the first Pentecost and what happened in that closed room where disciples had gathered. Sound of mighty *wind* from heaven, tongues of *fire* descending on the disciples; these are symbols of the Holy Spirit. Then, disciples go out preaching to the crowd

of people. Galileans preaching to people of different nations gathered in Jerusalem and all understood their preaching in their own language. The message is clear; what the disciples preached is a message destined for the whole world and not just for one people. All are speaking and hearing the message with full understanding, people are being brought together in unity under God.

Gospel of John (20:19-23) speaks about the mission of the disciples. Jesus says “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Disciples do not send themselves but Jesus sends them to continue His mission on earth. What’s the mission? “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any they are retained.” From this we get the clear message that as Jesus came to earth to reconcile humanity (world) to the Father and establish God’s kingdom on earth; disciples are sent to do the same. It’s about making people acknowledge the Lordship of God. It’s about people living to the directives of God. Jesus says “go, therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19). The entire world is our mission field. It’s important that making disciples is not reducible to converting people to Christianity and baptising them but a disciple is one who listens to Jesus and learns how to live, how to pray and how to do what is pleasing to God. Christian discipleship is a total way of life, a commitment to pattern our daily words and actions after the example set by Jesus. The ultimate mission of the Church is to bring back people to God and proclaim the Gospel of our Lord. To carry out this mission, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples; “He breathed on them and said receive the Holy Spirit.” Thus, the Holy Spirit brings them to a newness of life. They become a new creation and are filled with the courage to bear witness to Jesus.

We all have received the Holy Spirit on the day of our Baptism and then confirmed (Sacrament of Confirmation) to go out to spread the Gospel of our Lord. When we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit then we have the fruits of the Holy Spirit; joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:16-25) in ourselves. The grace and gifts have been given to us in order to spread God's mission on earth. St. Francis of Assisi felt the outpouring and the presence of the Holy Spirit so closely that he attributed the guidance and direction of the Order to the Holy Spirit, calling the Holy Spirit the Minister of the Order. *Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love so that we may live in love with God the Father and be true to the mission entrusted to us by God the Son.*

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