

Pentecost was and still is a Jewish holiday that is celebrated 50 days after Passover. It is one of three major feasts of the Jewish year and the reason so many people were in Jerusalem from so many different places for that first Pentecost of the Christian era.

And what a different day that was! There was the sound of roaring wind, the sight of tongues of flame over the heads of the Apostles. The day when Saint Peter stood before the crowd and gave his first sermon and everyone heard it in their own language. The day when 3,000 men, and probably their families, were converted to the faith. The day we celebrate as the birth of our Church.

This is the day when we normally speak to the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit, but I'm not going to do that today. That important information is readily available in the Catechism of the Catholic Church; a book that should be in every Catholic household and hopefully is not covered with dust.

Today I want to talk about how the Person who in my mind is the unsung hero of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, influences and helps us every single day of our lives, if and only if we are willing to listen to him. The Holy Spirit does so much for us, I could never come close to doing him justice so let me try to hit some of the high points that I have experienced in my life.

We all know that the Devil is prowling, looking to lead us into sin. The big temptations are easy to see coming and to avoid. It is the little things, the insidious snares that we so easily write off, the ones that open the door for the big temptations, those are the ones that lure us into the devil's trap. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads us to good. Yes we have our guardian angels, the Saints and Mary looking out and interceding for us, but by themselves they are powerless. They, like us are reliant on God and the Holy Spirit leads the hearts of the faithful to do good instead of evil.

Following the promptings of the Holy Spirit can be difficult. It requires practice and discipline. Many times we will have to give up something we think we enjoy, including changing our circle of friends. It is a real struggle, but in my experience, following Christ at the prompting of the Holy Spirit brings its own rewards. New and more enjoyable things to do, great friends, a sense of purpose and fulfillment and a comfortable sense of

peace and joy; all that and a pathway to heaven. Most definitely worth the time and effort.

The Holy Spirit provides us with gifts, he also provides us with limits defined by his gifts. We tend to bristle at the idea of limits but they are good for us. If you don't believe me go home and try this. Sit down with a blank piece of paper and start writing on anything, the subject doesn't matter, just start writing. Within the first paragraph you will develop a set of limits for your paper through subject matter, personal knowledge and how much research you are willing to put into the effort.

As people we don't do well with a 360 degree, 3 dimensional playing field. We need some boundaries to be truly happy. By his gifts, the Holy Spirit leads us to good; the limitations provide boundaries and focus. Since the Holy Spirit distributes his gifts as he wills, what is lacking in one is made up for in another. This is true in the marriage, the family, the Church and when we listen, in every facet of our lives.

The Holy Spirit confers grace through all of the Sacraments. Today I just want to mention 2. First the grace received through Confirmation. Do you realize that through the grace we receive in Confirmation, just that one Sacrament, every Confirmed Catholic is more spiritually gifted to evangelize and spread the Word of God than any protestant preacher regardless of the number of degrees and letters after his or her name? We have received special graces from the Holy Spirit, an indelible mark on our souls that says we are his people and have his gifts. Don't be afraid to evangelize, you are better equipped and have more support than you know.

The second sacrament is marriage. I can't count the number of secular cohabitations, or courthouse marriages that looked just great as they started that I have seen collapse under the pressure of time and trouble. Every Sacramental Marriage is a spiritual manage-a-trois' where all 3 members, the man, the woman and God are in love with each other. The Holy Spirit, who is the person of the Trinity who makes it possible for us to love, certainly encourages this love. When the couple involves God as an equal partner in their marriage, the world can and will push them around with temptation, hard times and sometimes bone crushing sorrow. But the marriage will be stronger for these trying times because God is there to carry the couple through the tough times to the joy awaiting them on the other side.

Finally the Holy Spirit allows and teaches us to pray. Not necessarily the words, but with the movement and deep groaning of our hearts as we seek comfort and solace in God. He opens the scripture to us and helps us to understand, he guides the Magisterium of the Church to keep her free from error. He intercedes for us along with Jesus Christ with the Father on our behalf.

The Holy Spirit blew across the waters at the beginning of time to bring life to creation. He us brings into his family at Baptism, he watches over us and provides us with an abundance of graces throughout our lives. And after we greet Jesus Christ when we get to heaven, he is there with the Father to welcome us to our reward.

Come Holy Spirit Come!