

PENTECOST 2024

Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church. Empowered by the gift of the Holy Spirit the apostles and other disciples carry on Jesus' mission to spread the good news of God's Kingdom. On the day of Pentecost the disciples of Jesus received the courage they needed to proclaim him as the promised Messiah who, risen from the dead, has ascended into heaven as Lord of all creation and as Head of his Body the Church.

What happened to the apostles on Pentecost has happened to each of us who have been baptized and confirmed.

As St. Paul reminds us, the Church and all her members are called to manifest the gifts of the Spirit who has been given to each individual for the benefit of all.

And so I would ask each of us to reflect on this: What are the special gifts God had given to you and how are you being called to use them for the benefit of others?

Recently we had three individuals step up to discern whether they are being called to join our parish pastoral council.

All three have been chosen to replace the three members who are stepping down.

In doing this we rely on the Holy Spirit.

When you have a decision to make, especially a difficult one, pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance, courage, and strength to know and do God's will.

As Pope Francis has said: "God never tires of listening to our prayers; it is we who grow tired of praying to God."

And let us all remember that the Holy Spirit is not a thing nor a bird! The Holy Spirit is a person.

The Holy Spirit is God's Spirit dwelling within us.

Or to put it another way, the Holy Spirit is the personal presence of God within each of us.

And it because of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us that we are united with Jesus Christ and with each other.

Therefore, we are never alone. Never. The Holy Spirit is always with us.

All that we have to do is to "tune in" to the Spirit for comfort, and for the ability to forgive, to resist temptation, and to be generous.

May our belief in the presence of the Holy Spirit be the source of our constant joy and the foundation of our surest hope.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in our recent listening sessions as part of our “Renewed in the Spirit” process we began during Lent.

We are now pulling together all the input we received so that we can present a summary to the parish in the near future.

Almost 50 persons took the time to share their stories about why they came to St. Joseph Parish and why they stay.

One very consistent theme was the sense of reverence with which we celebrate the Eucharist.

Reverence is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

It is through this gift that we recognize the holiness of our church building and the sanctity of the Mass.

Another gift of the Holy Spirit is the desire to participate actively in the Mass, especially through our singing.

We know that the mighty wind of the Spirit is blowing through this place when our voices are raised in praise of God.

It’s no coincidence that the Holy Spirit appeared to the disciples as tongues of fire.

The Holy Spirit loosens our tongues to profess our faith and proclaim our gratitude in joyful song.

At our parish mission Fr. Tom reminded us of a famous teaching of St. Augustine: They who sing pray twice.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit all of our voices sound beautiful before the throne of God