

## From the Desk of Fr. Patrick

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Pentecost Sunday is often called the “birthday of the Church” because it marks the moment when the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, were sent out courageously to proclaim the Gospel to the world. In Gospel from John 20:19-23, we find the disciples gathered behind locked doors, filled with fear and uncertainty after the death of Jesus. They were afraid, confused, and unsure of the future. Yet into that fear, the risen Jesus appears and speaks words of peace: “Peace be with you.” Then He breathes on them and says, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” In one moment, fearful disciples begin to become courageous witnesses.

This Gospel speaks powerfully to our world today because many people still live behind “locked doors” of fear, anxiety, discouragement, loneliness, or doubt. Some fear the future, others struggle with family problems, illness, financial burdens, or broken relationships. Yet Pentecost reminds us that the Holy Spirit still enters our lives bringing peace, courage, wisdom, and hope. The Holy Spirit strengthens ordinary people to do extraordinary things. We see this every day in parents sacrificing for their children, nurses caring for the sick with compassion, teachers patiently guiding students, volunteers serving quietly in the parish, and people who continue praying even during difficult times. These simple acts of love are signs that the Holy Spirit is alive and active.

Jesus not only gives peace to the disciples; He also gives them a mission: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” Pentecost is not only about receiving the Spirit; it is about becoming witnesses of Christ in the world. The Holy Spirit pushes the Church outward — beyond fear, comfort, and silence. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” The Holy Spirit works through small acts of kindness, forgiveness, and faithfulness that can transform lives. A kind word to someone struggling, a visit to the lonely, forgiving someone who hurt us, or praying with our family can become powerful moments of grace.

One of the most beautiful gifts of Pentecost is the gift of forgiveness. Jesus tells the apostles, “Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them.” Through this gift, Christ established the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where the Holy Spirit continues to heal hearts today. Many people carry guilt, anger, or wounds for years. Pentecost reminds us that God does not want us trapped in shame or bitterness. The Holy Spirit renews us and gives us a fresh beginning. C. S. Lewis wrote, “There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.” That is the promise of the Holy Spirit, God is always working to renew and restore us.

Pentecost also teaches us that the Church is united through the Holy Spirit despite differences in language, culture, and background. The Spirit creates unity, not division. In a world often divided by politics, race, conflict, and hatred, Christians are called to become instruments of peace and reconciliation. Pope Francis Pentecost Mass (May 28, 2023) reminded the Church that the Holy Spirit creates harmony and leads us away from selfishness and fear. A Spirit-filled Christian is someone who brings peace into conversations, healing into relationships, and hope into difficult situations. As we celebrate Pentecost, we should ask ourselves: what locked doors in my life need the Holy Spirit to enter? Perhaps it is fear, resentment, discouragement, or spiritual weakness. Jesus still comes to us saying, “Peace be with you.” He still breathes His Spirit upon His Church. May we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit so that we may live with courage, joy, forgiveness, and faith. And may the Spirit help us become disciples who bring the love of Christ to a world deeply in need of hope.

-Fr. Patrick