

Reflection & Meditation Article – Pentecost

Pentecost is the complement and the completion of Easter. Easter gives us the beginning of supernatural life and incorporation in Christ. But this new life must unfold; it must be strengthened and enkindled into a burning fire which can resist all things; it must be imbued with a love which is stronger than death, so that we are prepared to suffer all things Christ, even the sacrifice of our life. This strengthening of our spirit is brought about by our baptism with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The spirit of Pentecost is the spirit that makes the confessors and martyrs. It gives light, power, and unconquerable strength. This effect is visible in the apostles, who "went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (Acts 5:41).

Pentecost is the birthday of the Church and of Christianity, the beginning of the New Dispensation. Man, having been touched by the Spirit, no longer lives according to the flesh, according to the principles and ideals of fallen human nature; he lives in the Spirit. He is filled with the light of truth and is guided by the Spirit of truth Himself, the Holy Spirit. The new generation of men now sees all things in their proper place in the plan of divine providence and in their relationship to eternity. In the spirit of truth and love the new generation is called to act for good and upright motives, to do only what is pleasing to the Father. It is a generation of spiritual men. Since they "live in the spirit," they must also "walk in the spirit" (Gal 5:25). They belong to Christ, and with Him they are not envious of one another, but practice mildness, patience, and charity (Gal. 5:26f.). "The fruit of the spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity" (Gal 5:22f).

The feast of Pentecost is a day of thanksgiving for the foundation of the Church, in which are contained all the treasures of supernatural riches, and through which all grace and redemption are given to men. Pentecost is a day of thanksgiving for the coming of the Holy Spirit and for the establishment of the sacrament of confirmation. It is a day on which we place a joyful and grateful trust in the operation of the Holy Spirit within us, and thank Him for His inspiration and guidance. On this day we again place ourselves in the hands of the Holy Spirit with complete confidence. He should be the soul of our souls; He should reign in us, amid the ruins of our own fallen nature. Pentecost is a day of petition, a day on which we should implore the Holy Spirit for a full measure of His graces and gifts.

—Benedict Bauer, O.S.B, from *The Light of the World, Vol II, Pentecost*
(<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/calendar/day.cfm?date=2024-05-19>)

靈修與默想 – 聖靈降臨日

聖靈降臨日是由猶太人的五旬節演變而來。五旬節是猶太教三大節期之一，又稱七七節。猶太教嚴守猶太曆法，按期守節，五旬節是為記念以色列人出埃及後第五十天，上帝在西奈山頒佈「十誡」。按猶太曆法，猶太人在每年正月十四日守逾越節，其後接下來的七個星期，屬收割的季節，而這季節的高潮就在第五十日那天，他們會把第一束的收割作為獻祭。因為此時已到收成期末，百姓都歡樂地慶祝豐收（利未記 23:16-21）。特別在這天大祭司會將一捆新熟的大麥，獻給上帝作為初熟的果子。後來猶太人將聖經譯成希臘文時，將「五十」天這個日子翻譯成 pentecostē；到後來翻譯成英文時，完全採用了希臘文寫法，成為了今天大家熟識的 Pentecost，中文聖經譯為「五旬節」。

使徒行傳第二章所載，聖靈降臨在使徒身上，就是發生在五旬節當日，教會後來將這天稱為「聖靈降臨日」。正因為基督復活日後第五十天，亦即耶穌升天後第十天，聖靈傾注在門徒身上，他們得着能力說起方言，向來自各地方的人傳揚基督的福音。因此，**聖靈降臨日又被認為是基督教會誕生的日子**。時至今天，**聖靈降臨日是教會節期中第三個最重要的節日**，它包含兩重屬靈意義：1. 它應驗了耶穌預言和應許聖靈的降臨。 2. 使徒因得着能力，開始把跟從耶穌的信徒組織起來，要把上帝的福音向全世界宣講，建立在地若天的國度。這一天也是整個「復活期」的結束。通常在最後一堂崇拜完結時，主禮或侍從便會熄滅復活聖燭上的火，表示「基督的光」將隨着聖靈的降臨而走進每位信徒的生命裏，使我們每時每刻都能繼續將「基督的光」照耀出來。

聖靈降臨日禱文：

上帝啊，祢昔日使忠心信祢的人，得蒙聖靈的光照，心受教化；求祢使我們靠着聖靈的感動，能夠明辨萬事，常受聖靈安慰，得享喜樂；藉賴祢的聖子，我們的主耶穌基督，聖子和聖父、聖靈，三位一體的主，惟一上帝，一同永生，一同掌權，永世無盡。阿們。