



Pentecost: The Holy Wind!

"Blow, blow, blow till I be. But breath of the Spirit blowing in me"
(Song: Spirit of God in the clear running water: by Bob Rowe)



Let the Fire Fall

Pentecost is the day when we commemorate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Spirit that Christ promised them before His ascension back to His Father in heaven. Pentecost comes from the word Pente, the Greek word for fifty. So Pentecost is fifty days after Jesus has risen from the dead at Easter. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit more than 2000 years ago continues today at Pentecost and beyond, provided we pray and ask for this great gift. Our Blessed Mother with the apostles were waiting in the 'upper room' in prayer and expectation, and were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. We need to get to know the 3rd Person of the Holy Trinity which often times have been 'forgotten' - The Holy Spirit. So that we too, can be empowered and filled with power from on High.

What does it mean to be spiritual?

In our contemporary culture, this usually indicates some sort of mystical or phenomenal encounter. For those who believe in spirits or paranormal, feel an unusual connection to nature, they might be considered 'spiritual.' Even within the church, many think that the word *Spiritual* must indicate something or someone a little strange.

Depending on how much exposure to the Pentecostal – Charismatic movement, they might associate the word *spiritual* to those who claim to be inspired by the Spirit with the conviction of individuals falling to the floor while experiencing religious ecstasy; uplifted hands during songs and audible praying in tongues; speaking in prophetic words and interpreting, etc.

But charismatic exuberance is often an enshrinement and institutionalisation of emotions as integral to the spiritual life. Without those highly charged emotions, non-charismatic Christians are often judged "not filled with the Holy Spirit" by charismatic Christians. In many places, to not speak in tongues is judged to be a sign that one is not truly yielding to the presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life. There are many canonised saints who do not sing or speak in tongues!

Biblical Spirituality

In the Bible, the word *spiritual* does not refer to non-physical word or to a 'religious' person. Rather *spiritual* means specifically something that is related to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Bible refers to people who make up the church as "**spiritual house**" and we share the "**spiritual blessings**" and "**filled with the Spirit**" because "**God's Spirit dwells in you.**"

- Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a **spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5)
- They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their **spiritual blessings**, they ought also to be of service to them in material things (Romans 15:27)
- Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be **filled with the Spirit**, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts (Ephesians 5:18-19)
- Do you not know that you are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in you?** (1 Corinthians 3:16).
- **In summary, *spiritual* means having to do with the work of the Holy Spirit.**
- This definition of *spiritual* implies that to be Spirit-filled is not the same as being emotional. Affirmatively, the Spirit may be experienced in a way that stirs the emotions and leads a Catholic to exclaim, "God is really among you" (1 Corinthians 14:25).

What does it mean to be Spirit-filled?

Many believers have different ideas to be Spirit-filled? Some say that you must have this gift or that gift. You must worship this way or that way, with your hands fully raised up. And some think that this is all a hype and nonsense and over sensationalized.

Have you ever walked into a hard-blowing wind?

It is quite difficult, taking all you have to make a headway. If we are contemplating walking against the high wind facing us, we are in for trouble. Our ears start to strain to hear other lesser sounds, muffled in the gust. We will be sorely tempted to cover our face right up to the neck against the biting winds that chill us to the bones. We could be blown off balance and it is almost impossible to walk upright in high winds.

Our walk will become a physical challenge. We against the wind, and our heads bend down and straining just to put our foot forward. There will always be debris blowing about – leaves, small twigs, grass, etc could be heading our way that might hurt or worse cause injury. Gusting winds will cause us to lurch and jerk as we are buffeted around. This is exhausting, a real pain and it is a struggle! If the wind is blowing in our face, it is blowing against us. It's going to be a *headwind* of disaster!

Do not walk against the Wind ... Do not walk against the Holy Spirit

In the language of Scripture, the word for wind is **Ruah רוח**, the Hebrew word used by the Old Testament authors to mean "**breath**," and "**spirit**", "**wind**." In Hebrew, the Holy Spirit is the Holy Wind. So what happens if we walk against the wind? It creates a drag. It becomes harder to walk and we get tired. Or we may turn back the other way because our physical muscles cannot carry us through, just like when we go against the Holy Spirit, our spiritual muscles get weaker and we feel spiritually lethargic. In the same way, when we walk against the Holy Spirit, it creates a drag in our life. Everything we do becomes harder. It takes more energy to do less. So when we go against God's Spirit, you are fighting against the Wind. And we can't walk against the direction of the Wind without getting weary and worn out.

And which way is the direction of the Wind, the Holy Spirit? Walking in the direction of the wind's blowing. What was that like? It is definitely much easier. That's because there was no drag. We were walking in the direction of the wind. The wind helped us walk faster, propel us forward. There is a saying, "it's a breeze to do this work". Precisely it moved us forward and not forcing or pushing against us. It made our walking easier. When we walk against the wind, it creates a drag. Tantamount to dragging our feet and not walking with 'light steps.'" But if we turn around, the wind gives us power. So it is with the Spirit. If we turn, if we change course, if we repent, if we walk in the Spirit, then the drag disappears. Then the Spirit of God will empower us and will move us forward. And then everything that we must do, will become easier. As Jesus promised, "*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*" (Matthew 11:30)

So, if you walk in the Spirit – Life will go from being a drag to being a breeze. For those who walk in the Spirit, the Wind is at their back. It is helping us on our way and it is called a tailwind. This *tailwind* becomes the wind aiding our spiritual growth and development. Be sure to set sail if you intend to walk in the fullness of the Spirit. How many of us, Catholics found ourselves running against the wind or better said, contrary to the Will of God. If you look back on hindsight today ... those were difficult times. But when we were walking in the direction the Holy Spirit, we were no longer blown about by the distractions of this life. Things may not be always easy. But we can be sure if we are living and breathing the Holy Spirit, it will bring the plan of Christ to fruition in our lives. The Wind is the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it blows in the direction of the Holy, and blows against the direction of the Unholy. Which part of our life is against the direction of the Holy Spirit? Today, turn it around and start walking in the Wind with the Holy Spirit at your back.

What are some of the ways the Holy Spirit transforms us?

What are some of the signs the Spirit is truly at work in our lives?

Author Dave Nodar, in *Discover Christ*, offers these particular points.

1. The Holy Spirit can help the love of God come alive for us, giving us a profound personal conviction that our Heavenly Father loves us uniquely and personally, and that Jesus Christ offers and seeks an intimate and life-changing relationship with us.

2. Through the Holy Spirit, we become deeply aware of our own personal sinfulness and, more importantly, of God's willingness and, indeed, eagerness to forgive us and cleanse us perfectly and completely of our guilt and shame.

3. The Holy Spirit gives us the power and strength we need to live out and even share our faith in routine, and especially challenging, circumstances.

4. As the Holy Spirit's influence grows in our lives, we become more open to spending time in prayer, Bible reading, and receiving the Sacraments; we increasingly find the fulfilment of spiritual duties as not just something we *have* to do, but something we *need* and *want* to do.

5. We also feel a greater need and desire to praise and thank God—in particular, by praying spontaneously and from the heart, and wanting to express our gratitude to the Lord and glorify Him by what we say and do.

6. The Holy Spirit will help us root out vices and bad behaviours, and replace them with virtues and good habits; also, we'll find a deeper satisfaction in acting righteously.

7. Through the Spirit, we will realize more deeply that we are members of God's family, and in need of the support of our brothers and sisters in Christ; Christian community will become a higher priority in our lives.

8. As we progress in faith and virtue, we'll become more aware of the spiritual gifts we've received, and of our need to use them in building up the Body of Christ, the Church.

As we celebrate the birthday of our church, it is our birthday too. As we all know, the church does not consist of just brick and mortar but of flesh and blood - millions of people now under lockdown from the *plague of Coronavirus*.

The most intimate followers of Jesus received the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 20:19-23) and went straight to work, evangelizing people in the Name of the Trinitarian God. With the help of the Holy Spirit, millions of people converted and the course of world history forever changed.

What a difference the Holy Spirit has made in our lives and in the lives of so many others! Let us give credit to the Holy Spirit for countless blessings received, countless inspirations conceived and countless decisions arranged.

Most of us may have forgotten to give credit to the Holy Spirit where credit is most desired. **You are invited to pen down your thoughts or words of inspiration from the Holy Spirit during this time of circuit breaker period.**

For now, let us wish each other - Happy Birthday!



And join our hearts in prayer: -

“O Lord Jesus Christ Who, before ascending into heaven, did promise to send the Holy Spirit to finish Your work in the souls of Your Apostles and Disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to us that He may perfect in us the work of Your grace and Your love. Grant us the Spirit of Wisdom, that we may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the Spirit of Understanding, to enlighten our minds with the light of Your divine truth; the Spirit of Counsel, that we may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining heaven; the Spirit of Fortitude, that we may bear our cross with You and that we may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose our salvation; the Spirit of Knowledge, that we may know God and know ourselves and grow perfect in the science of the Saints; the Spirit of Piety, that we may find the service of God sweet and amiable; the Spirit of Fear, that we may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may dread in any way to displease Him. Mark us dear Lord, with the sign of Your true disciples and animate us in all things with Your Spirit. Amen.”

