

Out of the Upper Room

Reflection 3 - Pentecost



PENTECOST

- 50 days after the Resurrection of the Lord
- 10ish days after his Ascension into heaven
- The birthday of our Church
- Our parish's Feast Day

This Sunday is a big deal.

Has been for 2000 years...and actually even longer than that. Let's dive in!

The feast of Pentecost has its origins in the Old (or First) Testament, it is mentioned in Exodus 23 and 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16 if you're looking for some interesting reading. It is a Jewish Feast called The Feast of Harvest or The Feast of Weeks that has to do with (you guessed it) the harvest. The early harvest always fell in the middle of May to the end of June. So why do we call it Pentecost and not by its original Jewish names? We can thank the Greeks for that— Pentecost means 50th day. There are many feasts in the Jewish tradition that occur during this time of year— Passover, then Unleavened Bread, followed by the Feast of Firstfruits —when we start on day 1 on the Feast of Firstfruits and count the days to 50 we land on Pentecost (7 weeks...a week of weeks, hence the other name Feast of Weeks). This feast was also a pilgrim day— all adult Jewish males were to be in Jerusalem to observe the celebration.

Well that was a fun history/religion lesson!



This week is the 7th week since Easter— we have had a week of weeks. We know from the Bible (Acts 2: 1) that it was the day of Pentecost when the Apostles were all together in that upper room— they were good, devout Jewish men after all and should be in Jerusalem. From Acts 2: 2-4 we read: “And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them

ability.”

Well that's exciting! So exciting in fact that it drew a crowd, and Peter (the same one who always seems to say the wrong thing or miss the point– boy do I ever relate to Peter) spoke to the crowd. Now remember, there were people in Jerusalem from many different countries observing the Feast of Harvest and each of them understood Peter's words of the Good News. Through the power of the Holy Spirit filling the apostles, they were now equipped to start the mission of creating more disciples. In Acts 2:41 we hear that by the end of that day the Church grew to 3000 people! The followers of Jesus, the Christ– the rabbi from Nazareth, went from a small number of people to 3000 in one day! That is why we call it the Birthday of the Church– it is this moment that enabled the apostles to start spreading the message of Jesus to the world.

But wait! We knew this was coming, the apostles knew this was coming, maybe not with this much excitement, but they knew! Jesus had been preparing them for this. He told them that he would be leaving, but that the Advocate would be coming to remain with them forever. In John 14:16-17 he is very clear about this, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.” When the Advocate came to the apostles they were filled with the Holy Spirit and were able to get out of the upper room and start spreading the Gospel of Jesus.

That's all well and good for the contemporaries of Jesus and the apostles, but what does that mean for us today, in Saskatchewan? Well, as baptized and confirmed Catholics we have also been filled with the Holy Spirit. That same Advocate that burst into the upper room burst into our hearts on the day of our Baptism and we were sealed in that same Spirit on the day of our Confirmation and received the fruits and gifts of the Spirit. All that is to say that we are equipped and commissioned like the apostles on that day of Pentecost 2000 years ago to go out, spread the Good News of the Lord, and create disciples among all nations. So let's do it!



Prayer to the Holy Spirit

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.
Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.*

*In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

The English translation of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit from *A Book of Prayers* © 1982,
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