

Fact of FAITH

Pentecost

Pentecost marks the occasion of God sending the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples after his Resurrection. The book of Acts describes how the disciples were gathered together in one place on the day of Pentecost. The Jewish feast of Pentecost (*Shavuot* or the Feast of Weeks) was a day that commemorated the giving of the law to Moses, a day soon to be marked as well by the giving of the Holy Spirit. The day of Pentecost was a turning point for the disciples:

Before Pentecost, the disciples were unsure of what they were to do next and spent most of their time in hiding. After Pentecost and [receiving] the gifts of the Holy Spirit, they understood their mission to spread the Good News of Jesus, and they had the courage to come out of hiding and speak openly about who Jesus was and what he had accomplished by his dying and rising.¹

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit gave the disciples the strength to fulfill their commission to spread the Good News of Jesus. The Church marks this day through a special liturgical celebration:

The Solemnity of Pentecost, on the fiftieth day of Easter, concludes the Easter season. In recent years, the Church has restored the extended vigil for this solemnity. Similar to Easter, the vigil of Pentecost includes four readings from the Old Testament, each with a proper Psalm and prayer, along with the Epistle



and Gospel. At the conclusion of the Mass during the Day, the Paschal Candle is extinguished and moved to its permanent location near the baptismal font.²

The Solemnity of Pentecost, which crowns and fulfills the Easter season, is a good time to pray for a deeper indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Notes

1 Fact of Faith by Fr. Larry Rice, featured in *This Week in Ministry*, no. 26.

2 *Essential Guide to Seasons and Saints*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2013, 35.