

From the Pastor's Desktop

A Message from Father Charles Puthota

June 8, 2025



Dear Parishioners of St. Elizabeth,

Pentecost Sunday: Pentecost marked the birth of the Church and its mission to spread the Gospel to all nations, beginning with 3,000 new believers that day. The disciples of Jesus had been hiding, afraid that they might also be killed by the authorities. But Jesus had assured them that the Advocate, the Comforter, would come and remind them of everything Jesus had said. In other words, the Holy Spirit would come to give life, energy, and dynamism to the words and memory of Jesus. Everything changed for those disciples that Pentecost day. The Holy Spirit came down in a dramatic way. The wind and the fire swept the fears away and burned away their powerlessness. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they spoke and bore witness to the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection. Everyone heard everyone else in their own language and understood them. The good news became not only accessible but alive and aflame. The disciples of Jesus became fearless preachers and witnesses. A community was born with the memory of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. For over two thousand years this community has been called the Church. We are all members of this body. Jesus is the head. The Holy Spirit is the indwelling grace and power within us calling God Abba Father. If we allow the Holy Spirit to move and guide us, that's when we make the right choices for God, love, family, faith, and the world. Let's just keep two images of the Holy Spirit in mind: Wind & Fire. What might this wind and fire do for us and in the world today?

Word of God this Pentecost Sunday: In the first reading from Acts, the Spirit descends like wind and fire, empowering the apostles to speak in many languages. What was once fear becomes bold proclamation. God's Spirit unites people across barriers of language, culture, and background. In the Gospel, Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, "*Receive the Holy Spirit.*" Just as God breathed life into Adam, Jesus breathes new life into His Church. The Spirit brings peace, forgiveness, and mission. We are not meant to keep the Spirit for ourselves but to go out, to forgive, to reconcile, and to be agents of unity in a divided world. St. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians that the Spirit gives different gifts to each of us – wisdom, healing, service – but all for the common good. The Spirit doesn't make us identical; it makes us united in diversity. Today, let us ask: how is the Spirit calling me to serve? Am I open to being transformed and sent? Pentecost is not just a past event – it is the Church alive today, filled with fire and breath, ready to go forth in love.

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.

Quotes on the Holy Spirit: "I myself do nothing. The Holy Spirit accomplishes all through me." --- William Blake. "O Holy Spirit, descend plentifully into my heart. Enlighten the dark corners of this neglected dwelling and scatter there Thy cheerful beams." --- Saint Augustine. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." --- Galatians 5:22. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord. "The Holy Spirit is your spiritual GPS. He will tell you where you are and where you are going." "My thoughts belong to the Holy Spirit. They are not mine. St. Paul assures us that without the Spirit of Love, we cannot call God our Father." --- Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

Faith Formation Catechists Needed: If anyone would like to help our Faith Formation program by volunteering as a catechist, please would you let me know. We do need a couple of catechists for the coming year starting in the Fall season.

Pentecost Humor: 1. In Sunday school, the teacher asks, "Who is the Holy Spirit?" One kid raises his hand and says, "He's like God's breath." Another says, "He's the one who helps us do good stuff." A third kid adds, "I think He's the one who reminds me not to hit my brother, even when he really, really deserves it." The teacher nods. "That ... may be the most accurate theology I've heard all morning." 2. Pentecost is the only time in history where tongues of fire appeared *and* it was a good thing. If that happened today during youth group, the fire alarm would go off, everyone would sprint outside, and the Holy Spirit would be standing there like, "Seriously? You prayed for revival and now you're running from it?" 3. During a Pentecost lesson, a teen asks, "So ... the Holy Spirit shows up, there's wind, fire, people speaking foreign languages – and no one passed out?" The youth leader replies, "Nope. They got filled with boldness." The teen thinks, then asks, "Would this work for my oral Spanish exam?" "No, but the Spirit *can* help you not cheat on it." 4. After a fiery Pentecost sermon, the pastor says, "I want you all to be on fire for the Lord!" An elderly woman whispers, "At my age, I'm just trying not to set off my smoke alarm when I use the toaster." The man next to her nods, "Still, better to burn out for Christ than rust out in the pews."

Wishing you all the power, the light, the warmth and presence of the Holy Spirit in concrete and intimate ways in your lives,

Your Friend and Pastor,

Father Charles Puthota