

Pentecost / A

Today we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples gathered in the upper room, and transformed them. From being frightened and afraid and unsure what to do, they became courageous witnesses of Christ. The Holy Spirit gave them the gift of speech and people from all different places who were gathered in Jerusalem could understand them, and many became believers. On that day, the Church was born.

Today, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at that first Pentecost. But we also celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit into our hearts at our Baptism and Confirmation. We have all received the Holy Spirit. As St Paul teaches in today's second reading, in the one Spirit we were all baptised – Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as free – and the one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

In that reading St Paul goes says that there is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit. In other words, everyone receives the Holy Spirit but not everyone receives the same gifts from the Spirit. We each receive different gifts to help build up the body of Christ. In that we are like the human body which is made up of many different parts all working for the good of the whole body. The eyes see, the ears hear, the arms carry, the feet walk, the nose smells, and so on. Likewise in the Christian community – the Body of Christ – we need different members with different gifts.

So to each of us is given a particular manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. The gifts of the Holy Spirit should never be seen as a personal possession, or as a source of boasting or being proud. They are given for the building up of the body of Christ.

You may like to ask: What gifts has the Holy Spirit given to me to share with the whole body? What is my special giftedness? St Paul lists various gifts of the Spirit in his letters. These are some of the ones he mentions. What ones can you tick?

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Truthfulness

Gentleness

Endurance/perseverance/courage/fortitude

Administration

Almsgiving

Teaching

Healing

Wisdom/discernment/understanding

Forgiveness

Faith

Hope

Love – the greatest of all the gifts and one we all receive.

Which of these gifts do you have that you contribute to the whole?

You may also like to ask someone close to you, what gifts of the Spirit they see in you. You may be surprised by what they say.

Reflecting on this, what gift do you most wish the Holy Spirit to give to you at this time? Name it. Pray for it today.

*Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
Enkindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.*

Fr Michael Goonan SSP