

Pentecost: A Church in Mission

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

Today, Pentecost Sunday, marks the birth of the Catholic Church. It was on this day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary, igniting within them a fire that could not be contained. From that moment forward, the Church began to grow—not through human strength or planning—but through the divine presence and power of the Spirit. What had been a small, frightened group hidden in an upper room was transformed into a bold and fearless community, ready to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Before Pentecost, the Apostles were simple men—fishermen and tax collectors—unsure of what to do next. But after the coming of the Holy Spirit, they became men of courage, conviction, and self-sacrifice. As they stepped out into the streets of Jerusalem, speaking in many tongues and proclaiming Christ risen from the dead, something extraordinary happened: those who heard them understood. Pentecost was not simply the reversal of the confusion at Babel; it was the divine restoration of human unity—now bound not by a common earthly tongue but by the heavenly “language” of the Holy Spirit: the language of love, truth, and mission.

No one embodied the spirit of Pentecost in the modern age more than Pope St. John Paul II. Throughout his pontificate, he tirelessly brought the Gospel to all corners of the world, traversing continents, meeting countless people of every language and culture. He believed profoundly that the Church is not a static institution but a living, breathing body, always on the move, always in mission. As he once said: “The Church of Christ is always, so to speak, in a situation of Pentecost: she is always gathered in the Upper Room in prayer, and at the same time, driven by the powerful wind of the Spirit, she is always on the streets preaching.” This image of the Church—rooted in prayer yet propelled into action—remains as relevant today as ever. The world needs a Church that is alive with the Spirit, ready to serve, witness, and proclaim the hope that only Christ can give.

St. John Paul II also reminded us to recognize the fruits of Pentecost still at work today: “How can we not give thanks to God for the wonders the Spirit has never ceased to accomplish in these two millennia of Christian life? Indeed, the event of grace at Pentecost has continued to bear its marvelous fruits, everywhere instilling apostolic zeal, a desire for contemplation, the commitment to live and serve God and our brothers and sisters with complete dedication.”

And finally, he offered a powerful insight into the nature of the Holy Spirit’s gift: “In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke describes the extraordinary manifestation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as a communication of the very vitality of God who gives himself to men. This divine gift is also light and power: light, to proclaim the Gospel, the Truth revealed by God; power, to infuse the courage of witnessing to the faith, which the Apostles begin at that very moment.”

On this Pentecost, may we allow that same light and power to penetrate our hearts so we too might go out, like the Apostles and like John Paul II, to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy