

We know Pentecost as the time when the Holy Spirit was given to the Church to make her and keep her one, to make her and keep her holy, to make her and keep her apostolic, to make her and keep her catholic or universal. Maybe with this celebration of the Holy Spirit and the Church, we can miss an important dimension to Pentecost and that is the Holy Spirit and us.

We each received the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation to enable us to live a courageous Christian life. That Holy Spirit within us brings the courage to withstand the negative influences of our culture: wisdom to look past so much of the foolishness and shortsightedness that surround us, knowledge to apply the Gospel to our lives, understanding to comprehend the deep truths of Christ and the truth that the importance of our life in God's sight may be vastly different from what others may think of us.

These are the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable us to live the Christian life. With the state of the world around us as it is, we have the words of Jesus, "He that is in you is greater than he who is in the world." We have a presence, a source of renewal, revival, and refreshment given to us, the Holy Spirit, which we can miss if we limit the presence of the Holy Spirit only to the great events in the life of the Church and forget that He is part of our life as well.

Whatever happens in our life, whatever roads we may travel, that Holy Spirit is present as conscience, as repentance, as a way back, as an inner moral compass, as an urge to pray, as the desire to forgive, as a concern for someone who has experienced tragedy, as outrage against injustice, as direction for the future.

The Holy Spirit is present not just in tongues of fire or in extraordinary charismatic gifts. We terribly underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit if we limit the Spirit's presence only to extraordinary gifts. Far more important than the extraordinary gifts are the ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit catalogued by St. Paul in today's second reading. When we try to understand others, when we try to unite

rather than divide, when we show courage in not only proclaiming but living the Gospel, when we open our hearts in prayer, when we make wise choices, when we are faithful to our vows and promises, when we appreciate the majesty of God's presence these are the powerful everyday gifts of the Holy Spirit so often overlooked because we are looking only for something unusual.

Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit given to the Church and to each of us. Pentecost is not just about a single supernatural spiritual explosion on an afternoon in Jerusalem long ago. It's about the life of every one of us Christians. Deep inside us from Baptism and Confirmation burns a flame, maybe just a pilot light, maybe a fire but still a flame, a gift, promised by Jesus as the fulfillment of His Easter and that is the Holy Spirit. This gift of the Holy Spirit to us means several things.

It means that God is not remote; the Holy Spirit is with us, "in our hearts He takes up His rest." God is close to us. It means that whatever happens in our life, there is within us the Holy Spirit almost as a "holy enzyme" that can always renew the youth of our soul, whatever the age of our bodies. It means that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. The Spirit of God is greater than the spirit of the world.

The Holy Spirit shows His power not primarily in events that are fantastic but in lives that are faithful. The Holy Spirit is our personal link to what counts, our link to what is right, our personal link to God. The Holy Spirit is Christ's Easter gift to the Church and to each one of us.