



The Catholic Parish of Corpus Christi

Do You Have The Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit fell on the day that the Jewish people celebrated the harvest of the first-fruits because it was on this day—Pentecost—that harvest of souls was reaped for the Lord; it is exactly for this reason that today the Church celebrates her birthday.

Notice, please, the dramatic shift that took place in the lives of the first believers. At the Cross, most of Jesus’ disciples abandoned him—we know that Mary and John remained. Many times before, Jesus said that He would die and rise again, only to be met with incredulity. When He did in fact rise, the Magdalene’s testimony of the empty tomb was summarily dismissed. And even—*even*—when the Risen Lord appeared to the Apostles, they *still* had a hard time believing. After the Ascension, the first Christians kept themselves huddled in the Upper Room. Then, something changed. How? Or why?

To put this in to perspective, let’s compare our own lives to those first Christians. In many cases, the teaching of religion in Catholic schools is feeble and fainthearted. I have often gone out to restaurants with parishioners who do not bother to pray before eating. At both St Theresa’s and here at Corpus Christi, many people think little of coming to Mass late and leaving early. Very few people come to Bible study. In many ways, Catholics are like the Apostles who, at first, were timid, despite having been firsthand witnesses.

But there is *one thing* that makes tepid, lukewarm Catholics different from those Apostles who later boldly proclaimed Jesus—travelling to Rome, India, Spain, and Africa—and giving their final witness by preferring Jesus even to their own lives. What was it?

The **Holy Spirit**.

Before His Ascension, Jesus promised His first followers that the “Promise of the Father” [Lk 24:49] would come upon them, and that they would thus “be clothed with Power from on High” [*ibid*] and be “baptised with the Holy Spirit” [Acts 1:5]. On the same day the Jews commemorated the giving of the Law on Sinai’s height and celebrated the first-fruits of the wheat harvest, God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and Disciples who fled the security Upper Room to proclaim the “mighty works of God,” bringing at least three thousand into the fold of the Church.

What gives? In baptism, we each received the Holy Spirit. “For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one Body” [1 Cor 12:13]. St Paul also said: “And because you are sons [and daughters], God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba! Father!’” [Gal 4:6]; and again: “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” [Rom 5:5]; and again: “Do you not know that your body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?” [1 Cor 6:19].

At Confirmation, to, we received the fullness of the Holy Spirit. So, look back: When the bishop laid hands on you, what did you do? Did you sense “the rush of a mighty wind” and “begin to speak with other tongues?” [Acts 2:2, 4]? Were you like the first Christians at Ephesus who, when St Paul laid hands on them, who “spoke in tongues and prophesised?” [Acts 19:6]? Don’t think that these things were exceptional; the Apostles *expected* this to be the norm. In

fact, it *was* the norm for the first eight hundred years of the Church [cf. McDonnell and Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994)].

Why did these extraordinary experiences of the Holy Spirit begin to wane? And why do these extraordinary experiences appear to be lacking today? For one very simple reason: Many Catholics have allowed the ‘spirit of the world’ to override the Spirit of God. Most Catholics have a wrong idea of Christianity, that we’re supposed to ‘be like everybody else,’ only nicer, like a secularist cake with Jesus-frosting. Christianity, my friends, is a whole ‘nother pastry! And note that word: *Christianity*, from *christos*, ‘Christ,’ who was *echrisen...Pneumati Hagiō*, “anointed...with the Holy Spirit,” and in turn anoints *us* with the Holy Spirit so that we become ‘another Christ.’ It is the *Holy Spirit* that makes the Christian life, the supernatural life, the life of grace.

As I’ve asked many times, and I will ask it many times more: **You *have* the Holy Spirit, but does the Holy Spirit *have* you?** We are all under obligation to *yield* to the Gift of that indwelling Holy Spirit, to surrender, to be led by him. I want this parish to be full of Spirit-filled Christians; I want to see tongues of fire on your heads; I want to see a harvest of souls baptised and confirmed at the next Easter; I want a parish that is hungry to read and absorb the word of God and eager to pray before the Blessed Sacrament; I want every one of you—wherever you work—to imbue the secular order with the Gospel so that the ‘spirit of the world’ would diminish and give way to the Kingdom of God. Your eternal life depends on it.

Are you disinclined? Fair warning: resisting the Holy Spirit is the unforgiveable sin [cf. *Mt* 12:31; *Mk* 3:29; *Lk* 12:10; CCC ¶1864]. St Paul said, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” [*Eph* 4:30].

At the Table, we will invoke the Holy Spirit twice, first calling him down upon the Gifts to change them into the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, second asking him to gather and unite the Church that is scattered across the earth. Let us use this time to say, “I surrender. Holy Spirit, I surrender to you. Jesus is the Lord of my life. Do with me as you will.”

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Necessitas enim mihi incumbit: vae enim mihi est, si non evangelizavero (1 Cor 9:16).