

**Homily – Confirmations, Pentecost Sunday, Mass during the Day  
St. Joseph Catholic Church, Honey Creek – May 19, 2024**

Has any parishioner at St. Joseph's already received the gift of the Holy Spirit? I certainly hope so! We all received the Holy Spirit through Baptism. Confirmation strengthens our belonging to the Holy Spirit. We should constantly welcome the Holy Spirit! I am very happy to be here, at St. Joseph's in Honey Creek, on the Solemnity of Pentecost, the feast of the Holy Spirit, to seal these parishioners with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The ancient feast of Pentecost evolved to commemorate the covenant by the gift of the Law through Moses on Mount Sinai. The law, given on stone tablets, was a burden. However, the Lord's grace made the burden light. The new People of God are no longer led by a law written on stone, but by the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost, symbolizing a transition from fear to grace. Pentecost now commemorates the gift of the Holy Spirit, indicating a shift from living by the law to living by God's grace. Christians receive grace through the Holy Spirit, who moves us to fulfill the law through love. Charity, which fulfills the law, comes from the Holy Spirit, as witnessed by the disciples.

The disciples, including Mary, are depicted as united in prayer, anticipating the Spirit's arrival. The Holy Spirit becomes a permanent gift for all believers, fulfilling a promise of future salvation. The Holy Spirit should dwell in our hearts continually. Christians should celebrate with the "new wine" of God's grace, which flows through the Church's sacraments, liturgy, prayer, and works of mercy. The Holy Spirit calls us to leave earthly desires

behind to be worthy of the eternal inheritance. We are called to a renewal and transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit.

The arrival of the Holy Spirit is accompanied by a strong wind, symbolizing God's sovereign power. Tongues of fire symbolize the Spirit's presence, fulfilling the promise of widespread indwelling. The Holy Spirit enables the disciples to speak in different languages, signifying a reversal of the division that took place at the Tower of Babel. Pentecost reveals the universal scope of the Gospel. The confession of Christ as Lord is the work of the Holy Spirit, who plays the foundational role in the Church by fostering Christian faith. Various gifts are bestowed by the Holy Spirit for the common good, emphasizing unity amidst diversity. Saint Paul warns against pride and division, underscoring the Holy Spirit's intention for harmony among people. The Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, renew our identity and sense of belonging to God's People. The Holy Spirit empowers us to move past divisions based on ethnicity or status.

Today, Jesus commissions you to continue his mission, with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers those who have encountered Jesus to reconcile humanity to God. Let us allow the power of the Holy Spirit to transform us and lead us to foster harmony and unity. Pope Francis has said that *"the Holy Spirit is a specialist in bridging distances... he teaches us how to overcome them. It is he who connects the teaching of Jesus with every time and every person. (...) Christ's words, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, come alive today!"*

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, filled with the Holy Spirit, kindle in us the desire to pray to him and receive the Word of God.