

LITURGY BYTES

Come Holy Spirit!!



Next weekend, June 4 and 5, the Church celebrates the official end of the Easter season with the Feast of Pentecost. This is one of the great moments in the life of the Church because it celebrates the beginning of the Church. It is helpful to keep in mind that the Holy Spirit comes to give many spiritual gifts which prepare us to enter into relationship with Christ.

In looking at the timing and origins of Pentecost, we know that it occurs 50 days after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven. Because Easter is a moveable feast without a fixed date, Pentecost depends on the timing of Easter and can be celebrated anywhere between May 10 and June 13.

Other pointers about Pentecost are as follows: 1) The timing of these feasts is also where Catholics get the concept of the Novena – nine days of prayer. In Acts 1, we find Mary and the Apostles praying together continuously for nine days after the Ascension leading up to Pentecost. Traditionally, the Church prays the Novena to the Holy Spirit in the days before Pentecost. The name of the day itself (Pentecost) is derived from the Greek word “pentecoste” meaning 50th. 2) There is a parallel Jewish holiday called Shavu’ot which falls 50 days after Passover. This feast is sometimes called the festival of weeks, referring to the seven weeks since Passover. Shavu’ot commemorates the sealing of the Old Covenant on Mount Sinai, when the Lord revealed the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. Every year the Jewish people renew their acceptance of the gift of the Torah on this feast.

For us Christians, Pentecost is the celebration of the Holy Spirit coming upon the Apostles and Mary in the upper Room. This strong, driving force came to them and allowed them to speak in different languages, giving them the gifts needed to go out and preach the Gospel to all nations. Next weekend when we attend Mass, be sure to wear something red for this special feast as we reflect on the words of Pope Francis: “We need the Holy Spirit to transmit the faith. We cannot do it alone.”

Have a blessed, safe, and spirit-filled week! ~*Michele Hall*