

Pentecost Sunday 2026

Acts 2:1-11 *Are not all of these people Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?*

Ps 104 *LORD, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*

1Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13 *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.*

Jn 20:19-23 *"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ...he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."*

**What must it have been like in the Upper Room on the day of Pentecost? A rush of wind, a flicker of flame – and suddenly, voices raised, but not in a unified chant, rather, in several languages all at once. And yet, somehow, there was no confusion. *Each one heard them speaking in his own language.* It's worth noting that each person heard not just a dialect or a tongue but *his own language*, the language that could reach that person's heart.**

**We may often reduce this miracle to a kind of supernatural translation – hearing Hebrew in Greek or Aramaic in Latin. The text is clear: many languages were spoken. What is most miraculous is that the hearers understood. They heard and they felt spoken to, understood and felt known, loved, and cared for. Isn't that what we all long for?**

**We live in a time of incredible noise. Voices flood our social media, our news feeds, our public squares. But how many of those voices actually speak our language? How many know enough of our stories—our wounds, our hopes, our particular human experiences --- to reach past the surface?**

**The miracle of Pentecost is not just about multilingual proclamation. It's about divine empathy. It's about the Holy Spirit of God equipping the church to speak the Gospel in a way that is intelligible to every human heart. That's our call too --to become fluent, not just in doctrine, but in the lived experience of our neighbors. To know the language of someone else's life enough to speak Christ into it with meaning.**

**Sometimes that means literal translation: learning new languages, honoring the cultural traditions of others, praying and worshiping in ways that make room for different communities. But often it's more subtle than that. It's learning to speak the language of grief when someone's life has been marked by loss.**

Learning to speak the language of resilience with someone who has endured injustice. Learning to speak the language of curiosity to a young person full of questions, or the language of patience to someone who's been hurt by the church and isn't ready to trust again.

This kind of fluency doesn't come from books. It comes from listening. From being willing to sit long enough with someone's story that you can name what's sacred in it. It comes from humility – recognizing that just because the Gospel makes sense in YOUR life doesn't mean it will automatically make sense in someone else's – at least not in the same way. And that's okay.

Pentecost reminds us there isn't one perfect way to proclaim the Gospel. There is only the Spirit's way – diverse, wide-reaching, deeply personal. That means, our job isn't to script a message and deliver it unchanged. Our job is to enter into relationship, to listen with love, and then --- only then --- to speak the Word that is needed. To speak it in the person's language. This is hard work. It's much easier to shout into the void than to speak to the individual. It's much easier to stick with “the way we've always said it” than to discern how Christ might need to be spoken in *this* life, *this* moment, *this* heart.

The Holy Spirit didn't come to make things easier. The Spirit came to make us braver. So today, ask yourself: Whose language do I need to learn? Whose story have I not yet taken the time to understand? Who is waiting – not for a louder voice but for a more loving one? Then, pray for the grace of Pentecost – not just for fire and wind, but for the quiet miracle of understanding. The kind that makes strangers feel known. The kind that breaks down fear. The kind that proclaims the Gospel not just in words but in relationship. Because that's when the world begins to hear. That's when the Church begins to speak. That's when the Spirit is at work. *And it's Pentecost once more,*

(Homily by Javier Soegaard in  
Loose Leaf Lectionary, Homily Hints)