

# ANDY'S RESOURCE-OF-THE-MONTH: June 2017

*My Commentary on: The Holy Spirit and the Feast of Pentecost Sunday*

*Online Catechism of the Catholic Church* → [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c3a8.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c3a8.htm)

*EWTN Resource Page* → <http://www.ewtn.com/devotionals/pentecost/pent1.htm>

## Who is the Holy Spirit?

This Past Sunday, May 28, we celebrated the feast day of the Ascension of Jesus, our Lord. This is the commemoration of the day that, according to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his 11 Apostles to proceed to the mountain where He had previously appointed them. There, Jesus tells them, “all power is given to me in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18).” In other words, He is the King of the universe. He then commissions His apostles to: “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching the nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world (Matthew 28:19-20).”

This Sunday, we celebrate the feast of Pentecost. For this reason, I have chosen to highlight a section of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which gives a very detailed description of the Holy Spirit, His role and His gifts. I would also like to highlight a great resource page put together by EWTN about Pentecost and the Holy Spirit. There is some great information to browse through here to help you learn all about the Holy Spirit (see the above links).

In John's Gospel, Jesus says, “he will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete that he may abide with you forever (John 14:16).” The Paraclete, or Consoler, is also identified as the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, and our Advocate.

Pentecost Sunday is the birthday the Church, because the Apostles and other disciples received the promise of the Father, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit descends on them in the form of tongues of fire and they are able to go out boldly proclaiming the Good News. The Gospel specifies that 3000 souls were baptized that day because of this gift of the Spirit.

Throughout Sacred Scripture, we read several different phrases used to describe God's Spirit. Also, several different symbols are used to describe the Holy Spirit (water, anointing, fire, cloud and light, the seal, the hand, the figure, the dove). For example: after Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descends upon Him while He is in prayer, accompanied by a voice from heaven (see Luke 23:21-22). In sum, the Holy Spirit is identified using many words and symbols in Sacred Scripture, yet there is only one Holy Spirit. There are gifts that originate from the Holy Spirit, and there is the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now the Apostles, who are gathered together in a room with the door shut, also receive the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection, prior to Pentecost. This account is found in John's Gospel. After Jesus's resurrection, and prior to his ascension, He appears to the Apostles in the upper room. Jesus greets them saying, “Peace be with you. As the father has sent me, so I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained (John 20:21-23).”

Let's just pause and think about this for a minute... They received the Holy Spirit in the upper room, but then they again receive the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday. Only God can forgive sins, and Jesus forgave sins while He was ministering here on earth. The Apostles received here a special power from Christ by way of the Holy Spirit to forgive and retain sins. Jesus is instituting a priestly holy order, which was given to the Apostles. The Apostles are now ordained priests, acting in the person of Christ in His New Covenant. They have become the New Covenant ministerial priests.

Now we as Christians are all New Covenant priests as the gospels tell us, but God also appoints the Apostles as ministerial priests of the New Covenant. There is more evidence of this in Sacred Scripture in the Acts of the Apostles, when Simon the magician came to believe also and was amazed at all the signs and exceedingly great miracles which were being done. Now scripture says that Peter and John traveled from Jerusalem to Samaria, because the converts were "only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16)." These converts had not yet received the Holy Spirit, so Peter and John went and prayed for them, so that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

This brings to my mind a number of questions: Why can't the converts pray for the Holy Spirit? Why can't Philip pray for the converts to receive the Holy Spirit? Why couldn't Peter and John just stay in Jerusalem and pray for them to receive the Holy Spirit? Well, because it's the ministerial duty of the Apostles (the first bishops) to anoint these converts with chrism to receive the Holy Spirit. The Gospel also says that Peter and John lay hands on the converts and then they receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the power of the Holy Spirit was made manifest by the imposition of the hands of Peter and John. Only they, and the other Apostles, have been appointed to do this. This is such a special power that Simon, the former magician, wants to give money to Peter and John, so that he also can have the power that bishops have.

Any Catholic reading this chapter of the Acts of Apostles will immediately identify this as the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is performed by the Bishop, Confirmation at ground zero in the Acts of the Apostles. The fact is, Jesus left us a universal magisterial Church that would preserve the deposit of Faith: "One Lord, one faith and one Baptism (Ephesians 4:5)." The Church also gave us the Catechism, which helps us to enrich the deposit of faith handed down to us by Christ and his chosen Apostles, the first priests and bishops of the New ministerial Covenant.

I now invite you to read through the links to the Catechism and the EWTN resource that I have highlighted for this month, and I hope that this reading will enrich and deepen your faith in Christ, our King of the universe.

Thanks for reading, and if you find FreeTruth.ca and our commentaries helpful in your spiritual journey, then we would like to hear from you. Contact us to let us know your thoughts.

Kindest regards,

Andy