



Vox Populi

16 May 2024

Pentecost is one of the great feasts of the Church, marking the end of Eastertide and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostles.

At the first Pentecost, the Apostles were gathered, when a “mighty rushing wind” and “tongues as of fire” appear, filling them with the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, fire often represents God’s presence, with Abraham, Moses, the wandering Israelites, and Elijah all experiencing God in this form.

Wind is also representative of the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew word for spirit also means breath and wind.

The presence of wind and fire in this moment shows us God’s presence with the Apostles and with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This coming of the Holy Spirit fulfilled Christ’s promise to send an Advocate to help the Apostles in their mission.

At Pentecost, the Apostles were sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the same gift we receive in Confirmation.

Just as the Apostles received the Holy Spirit as they prepared to go out on Mission and evangelise, we’re given the Holy Spirit to guide us and be an advocate for us in our own mission.

It was right after Pentecost that Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, preached his first homily to Jews and other non-believers, in which he opened the scriptures of the Old Testament, showing how the prophet Joel prophesied events and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

He also told the people that the Jesus they crucified is the Lord and was raised from the dead, which “cut them to the heart.” When they asked what they should do, Peter exhorted them to repent of their sins and to be baptized. According to the account in Acts, about 3,000 people were baptized following Peter’s sermon.

For this reason, Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Church — Peter, the first Pope, preaches for the first time and converts thousands of new believers. The apostles and believers, for the first time, were united by a common language, and a common zeal and purpose to go and preach the Gospel.