



## PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 19, 2024

### *St. James Catholic Church*

*3909 Harrison \* Kansas City, Missouri 64110*

#### *Reflection from Ben Babaran*

This Sunday is Pentecost Sunday which we better call the Feast of the Holy Spirit. Actually, the meaning of the word Pentecost is 'fiftieth' and was the second of the three most important of the annual feasts of the Jewish calendar. For Christian people, Ascension occurred on the 40th day after which the 40th day anniversary of the death of a person is based. This Pentecost feast occurred seven weeks after Passover feast. For Christians especially Catholics, this feast occurs after the Resurrection of Jesus. This feast for the Jews was primarily a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest: the first fruit of the wheat crop was offered to God on that day. Later, the giving of the Law of Moses in Mt. Sinai was also commemorated on this feast day.

Pentecost Sunday is always associated with the descent and giving as a gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. But Pentecost is the moment when God manifests Himself in a hidden way, silent and simply way.

In the Old Testament God is revealed in a burning bush or pillar of fire; in the Gospels, in a single human being, Jesus. Yet today, Acts tells us, spiritual fire descends from heaven and separates into multiple tongues of flame, one for each person's head. Each of us is individually and personally embraced by God, filled with grace, possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Which might explain why there are seven gifts of the Holy Spirit rather than one, and twelve fruits. We all need the gifts of Pentecost. We are very different people: one needs wisdom and understanding, another courage, one wants practical counsel or knowledge, another piety or reverence (Isa 11:1-2; CCC 1831 & 1845). When the spiritual gifts descend upon different heads (temperaments, histories, interests) the effects we call 'fruits' will sometimes be "love, joy or peace", at other times "patience, kindness or goodness", in one person "generosity, gentleness or fidelity", in another "modesty, chastity and self-control" (cf. Gal 5:22-23; CCC 1832). In sending us the Spirit, Christ ensures each has the means to be the distinct kind of saint that God has destined them to be.

At St. James, we are very proud of our Pentecost flags. May these flags remind us of these seven gifts and the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit. May we be bearers of forgiveness in a world torn by war, hatred, division, put-downs, and alienation.