



## Pentecost: Gift of the Holy Spirit

*Reflection by Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS*

Back in the days when I was growing up, the Holy Spirit was referred to as the “Holy Ghost.” Being the imaginative child that I was, I took this to mean a real ghost of some sort. When the front doors of our church were open, the reflection from passing cars would flash across the front wall and I thought that this must be the Holy Ghost visiting our church! As the term “Spirit” came to replace “Ghost”, so did my understanding of the meaning of this third person of the Holy

Trinity evolve into what it is today. Pentecost, often called the Birthday of the Church, was the event when the Holy Spirit was first given to the 12 apostles, Mary, and all who came to follow Jesus. Today, we could say that our baptism is our first encounter with the Holy Spirit and that we celebrate its formal reception in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

This was and continues to be an event of gift-giving throughout life. There are the initial seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. God is generous, and these are not the only gifts we are given. There are many “Pentecostal moments” in our lives when, under the Holy Spirit’s influence, we experience a closeness to God as promised by Jesus. Primarily, the Holy Spirit speaks within us. It could be those moments when we are sometimes inexplicably drawn to prayer or feel a deep need to give or ask for forgiveness. A sudden inspiration to visit a sick friend might be rooted in the Holy Spirit. Nature can also provide a doorway to the Holy Spirit, lifting our hearts and spirits through the many sights, sounds, and colors with which God created the world, and which the Spirit leads us to protect and maintain.

The charitable response made in a chance encounter with a person in need is also a sign that the Holy Spirit is present and at work. It was the Holy Spirit who, on that Pentecost day, led those first followers of Jesus out of the upper room and gave them the courage to proclaim the Good News of Jesus to the people. It is the same Spirit that can move us out of the inner rooms of ourselves so that we, too, can make the love and goodness of the Savior known to others. Blessed Jordan often raised the need to pray to the Holy Spirit at least once a day if Salvatorians were to be effective in their mission. He would pray the *Veni Creator* constantly. John Henry Cardinal Newman offers another prayer to the Holy Spirit that we can use:

COME HOLY SPIRIT  
MAKE OUR EARS TO HEAR  
MAKE OUR EYES TO SEE  
MAKE OUR MOUTHS TO SPEAK  
MAKE OUR HEARTS TO SEEK  
MAKE OUR HANDS TO REACH OUT  
AND TOUCH THE WORLD WITH YOUR LOVE.

God Bless,

Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS



### **Fr. Peter Schuessler, SDS**

Fr. Peter has served as USA Provincial, Vicar Provincial and Formation Director. Currently he is semi-retired, continuing spiritual direction and serving in various capacities. Additionally, he has been invited to Rome to be part of a special commission exploring the identity and mission of the Salvatorians.