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*Divine Spirit, renew your wonders in our time, as though for a new Pentecost, and grant that the holy church, preserving unanimous and continuous prayer, together with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and also under the guidance of St. Peter, may increase the reign of the **Divine Savior**, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Amen.*

~ Prayer of Pope John XXIII to the Holy Spirit, 1961

## The Power of Pentecost

By Dennis Holt

When many of us hear the word Pentecost we immediately think of the Holy Spirit appearing to the hundred and twenty in the Upper Room and baptizing them in the Holy Spirit. As powerful as that was, Pentecost started many years before and the Upper Room experience was a fulfillment of something that the Father had started when the Israelites were released from their captivity in Egypt.

Because we live in something God created called "time," the Father gives us certain markers to know where we are in His Vision for mankind. In Genesis He states:

**And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years –**  
Genesis 1:14.

The Moon was used by the Israelites extensively to determine Holy Days, Feast days and sacred times. New moons, full moons, blood moons, and eclipses all represented something to the Jewish Rabbi who understood them as a way of God speaking. This was serious business to them and it was important that they follow each part of the ceremonial law to the letter.

Seven in Hebrew represents perfection, another way that God speaks using each number to represent something that again was very important to the Jewish people. Therefore in Leviticus Chapter 23 the Lord established seven feast days with the people. These feast days were called the **moadim** in Hebrew which meant "the appointed times." The seven feasts are: Passover; Unleavened Bread; First Fruits; Pentecost; Trumpets; Atonement and Tabernacles.

The Jews were required by God to come to Jerusalem to worship on Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. This is why Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem when the "sound came from heaven like a rushing wind," and when they heard the disciples speaking in tongues they recognized it as a language and not just gibberish.

Every feast day meant something to the Jewish family who observed the feasts on the day appointed. We are well aware of Passover as the lamb was slain and its blood placed over the doorpost as the death angel passed over the house when the first-born of Egypt was condemned.

**Continued on page 2**

Unleavened Bread was a week-long feast that required the family to go through the house and remove anything that might cause a temptation to sin. Because leaven represented sin, unleavened flat bread or **matzah** was eaten during this time. It is interesting that some make the bread with holes punched in it and it can legally be made from only five different grains (wheat, barley, oats, spelt, and rye). Five is the Hebrew number for grace. Can you see Jesus here?

The Feast of Firstfruits was celebrated by the priest bringing the first heads of grain when it appeared in the field. The barley and the wheat heads were taken into the Tabernacle and waved before the Lord as an offering in anticipation of a blessed harvest. It is celebrated the first day of the week after the Sabbath within the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is the reason Jesus had to lie in the tomb for three days until they could return to anoint His body with herbs and spices. There was preparation for the high Sabbath (Unleavened Bread) and then preparation day for the low Sabbath (Saturday).

**Going to Pilate, he (Joseph of Arimathea) asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin (High Sabbath) – Luke 23:52-54.**

Because of the feast days and their time of preparation, this left Jesus' body undisturbed for the three consecutive days. The High Sabbath of the first day of Unleavened Bread immediately followed by the Low Sabbath of Saturday. Because the feast days are different every year, this year was unique in that these days were consecutive. In any other year, with the way the feast days fell on the calendar the disciples would have been back to anoint the body of Jesus, disturbing it within the three day window that He lay in the tomb. It was vital that Jesus lay in the tomb three days and three nights.

**Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth – Matthew 12:38-40.**

Jesus said, "I have longed to eat this Passover with you" – Luke 22:15. This Passover and the related Feasts gave Him the three days and nights in the tomb His body lying undisturbed. As soon as the sun set on the Sabbath (Saturday), Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week which would be our Sunday, their Feast of First Fruits. He was already out of the tomb when Mary got there before dawn.

**Now after the Sabbath, (low Sabbath – Saturday) as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb – Matthew 28:1.**

**On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb - Luke 24:1-2.**

Jesus died on Passover. He was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He rose from the dead on the Feast of First Fruits and became the "First Fruit" from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20). Everything happened right on God's timeline; which brings us to Pentecost. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days from First Fruits. It was called Shavuot or the Feast of Harvest. What do you think the Father had in mind with the Holy Spirit re-empowering man on the Feast of Harvest? There were three thousand added to the church that day just by Peter preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:41).

The prefix Pente means fifty. Fifty days from the First Fruits Feast we have the Feast of Pentecost. There were three Gifts given on the Feast of Pentecost: the Holy Spirit, the Gift of Tongues and the Creative Sound – every Gift needed for the harvest. Think of this: The Eucharist could not become Eucharist without the Creative Sound. Every

prayer we pray using Jesus' Name uses the Creative Sound. As I share in an accompanying article, the Gift of Tongues was one of the most powerful Gifts we could have been given. Just as God uses the Feast Days to validate His Vision, He uses Pentecost to empower those who understand the Harvest and who wish to join the Father in fulfilling His Vision and bringing the Kingdom of God to this earth.

What about the remaining three Feasts: Trumpets, Atonement, Tabernacles? As yet, they have not been fulfilled but I can assure you that they will be, just like the first four were fulfilled completely and right on time. I might add that the first three Feasts occur in the Spring, the Feast of Pentecost in the middle of the calendar year and the last three Feasts in the Fall of the year. That should give you a clue.

The seven Feasts are important to the Father and should be important to us because for one thing they demonstrate just how much the Father is in control. He controls everything but our free-will. This year as you celebrate Pentecost Mass ask the Holy Spirit for a fresh anointing on your life and ask Him how you and your gifts and talents may be used not only for the Harvest but to help Him fulfill His Vision. After all that is the reason you are here.

DFH



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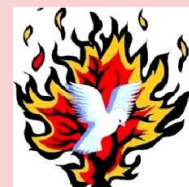
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# **Joel's Prophecy and Pentecost: Listening, Receptivity and Intimacy with the LORD**

**Ms. Cynthia A. Donnelly, O.P., M.A.T.S.**

As the Feast of Pentecost quickly approaches, it can be spiritually fruitful to prayerfully and gratefully consider our own experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit while reflecting on sections of *The Acts of the Apostles*. One good passage for meditation is where St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, says, "These people are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel ..." (Acts 2:15-16, NAB). So what did Joel prophesy? Let us look at the prophecy in its historical context and see what the Lord is saying to us through it today.

## **Historical Background**

During the lifetime of the prophet Joel, <sup>1</sup>the people of Judah experienced a devastating influx of locust and a dire drought. Through the prophet Joel, Yahweh said to His people,

*Yet even now, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. For gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and relenting in punishment (Joel 2:12-13).*

Young and old, priest and lay, all of the people gathered together in prayer and fasting and weeping, and they called upon the name of the Lord for deliverance (Joel 2:15-17).

Moved with compassion for His people, the Lord removed the locust from their land and sent rain to end the drought, thus beginning a season of physical abundance in regard to grain, oil wine, fruit, and livestock (Joel 2:19, 22-26). These blessings were proof that God was in their midst and that He desired to bless them (Joel 2:27). The recognition of the Lord's Presence by His people is a key component to understanding Joel's prophecy. It is an intimate relationship with Himself that the Lord desires to give to the people, not just material blessings.

Yahweh promised that at a later time, he would also pour out his Spirit on all people, male and female, young and old, and of every rank:

**Then afterward, I will pour out my Spirit upon all mankind.**

**your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,**

**your old men shall dream dreams,**

**your young men shall see visions;**

**even upon the servants and the handmaids,**

**in those days, I will pour out my spirit (Joel 3:1-2).**

According to Scripture scholar Everett F. Harrison, this pouring out of His Holy Spirit would be accompanied by meteorological signs, and they would mark the beginning of the Messianic age and the Day of the Lord (Joel 3:1-5; Acts 2:16-21).<sup>2</sup>

**Pentecost – Joel 3:1 Fulfilled; Receptiveness to the Voice of the Lord is Required**

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<sup>1</sup> No consensus has been reached by Scripture scholars regarding the date of Joel's prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison, Everett F. *Acts: The Expanding Church*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 58.

Yahweh's promise to pour out His Spirit at a later time was fulfilled at the Feast of Pentecost, as recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, Chapter 2. Among the many details of the Pentecost account is a striking difference between the receptivity of the devout Jews and those who are described as "scoffers." St. Luke describes the amazement of the "devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem" to the preaching of the Apostles on the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:5). Luke tells us "they were confused because each one heard them [the Apostles] speaking in his own language ... 'Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then *how does each of us hear them in his own native language?*' ... What does this mean?" (Acts 2:6-7, 12, emphasis added). Notice that those who are asking the question *how* it is *they are hearing*, not how the Apostles learned, their native languages are identified by Luke as devout Jews. The scoffers, on the other hand, said, "They have had too much new wine" (Acts 2:13). By examining the gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues throughout the New Testament (esp. 1 Cor. 14:1-19 in the overall context of 1 Cor 12-14), one may conclude that the devout Jews received one form of the gift of interpretation of tongues, i.e., a reversal of the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9), and that the scoffers did not.

One can find a similar separation between groups of hearers before the Feast of Pentecost in Jesus' speech following his entry into Jerusalem. A large crowd gathered to see Jesus, and Lazarus whom he had raised. Jesus said, "'Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it and will glorify it again.' The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, 'An angel had spoken to him.' Jesus answered and said, 'This *voice* did not come for my sake, but for yours'" (John 12:28-30, emphasis added). It seems that God revealed Himself to the humble and devout hearers, but did not burden those who did not yet want to hear the truth.

At Pentecost, the devout Jews asked, "What does this mean?" It is at this point that St. Peter proclaims that the charismatic activity they witnessed was the fulfillment of what Joel prophesied. God was pouring out His Spirit on His people, and now Peter had an open door to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ. Although the Holy Spirit's gifts had a practical use, they were primarily given for the sake of joining God's People to Himself in an intimate relationship. The intimacy that the prophets of Joel's time enjoyed with God was now available to all who would receive it.

### **Application**

In the early Church, the charismatic manifestations followed adult baptisms. In the 300's, Hilary Poitiers, Bishop and Doctor of the Church, compared Psalm 64:14 to the experience of Baptism in his day.

We begin to have insight into the mysteries of faith, we are able to prophesy and to speak with wisdom. We become steadfast in hope and receive gifts (plural) of healing. Demons are made subject to our authority.<sup>3</sup>

Adult preparation for Baptism in the early Church led to a deep conversion to the person and teachings of Jesus, and an expectation of transformation upon receipt of the Holy Spirit. This

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<sup>3</sup>Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit; Evidence from the First Eight Centuries*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994, Second Revised Edition), 183-4, Citing Hilary, *Tract on the Psalms*, 64:14; CSEL (*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*), 22.246.

preparation led to the actualization of the intimacy with God promised in Joel's prophecy. How often do we see these manifestations of the Holy Spirit at the Confirmation of teenagers or at the Baptism of adults during the Holy Saturday liturgy? Sometimes, but let's be more precise: seldom. The practice of infant baptism -- which is good -- introduces some challenges because the fullness of the sacrament requires action on the part of both God and man. God always does His part [which the Church calls the *opus operatum*]. The Holy Spirit always gives the remission of sins and divine sonship in Christ, and imparts the virtues of faith, hope and love [charity] in seed form. But in order for the grace and power of the sacrament to be actualized in the life of the baptized person, he or she must respond with faith -- a belief that is an essential part of the transformation process [which the Church calls the *opus operantis*].

Cradle Catholics are sometimes catechized well, but evangelized poorly. So, there is a disconnect between the doctrinal knowledge they do have about Christ, and the missing experiential knowledge of Him through prayer and the sacraments which they should have, but do not. The fruit of this situation is a sharp decline in Mass attendance, a lack of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and a sharp increase in the number of Catholics joining evangelical churches while other Catholics succumb to the secularization of the prevailing culture, thus falling away from the faith completely.

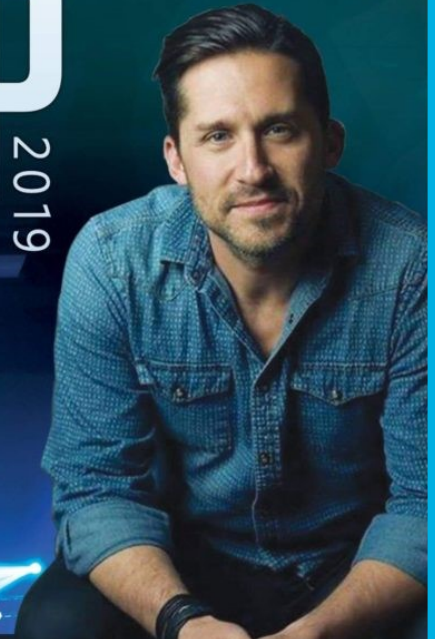
The last four popes, from Paul VI to Francis, have praised lay ecclesial movements, such as the Catholic Charismatic Movement, as true movements of the Holy Spirit in our day. So what is the Holy Spirit doing in these groups? He is leading people to conversion -- to a deep "yes" to Jesus Christ as Lord. It is a "yes" that, in effect, is the *opus operantis* that many adult Catholics did not make earlier in their lives for a variety of reasons that may not be their fault. Often, they have not been evangelized, i.e., the proclamation of the saving message of the Gospel that requires a deep and personal response to Christ has not been received. Now, they are hearing and answering His call through these movements.

These brothers and sister, and all of us who have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, are those who, in our own day, are experiencing the reality of the intimacy with God that was promised by Joel. It is not just a promise of the outward manifestation of the Spirit, but also a greater release of the Sanctifying Gifts of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation. This release leads all of us into that union with God for which every human heart yearns. The reality of the True Presence, the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, a thirst for the Scriptures, a love for the poor -- these are just a few realities to which we bear witness in our newness of life in Christ. Perhaps this is why we are called an "Alleluia People!"



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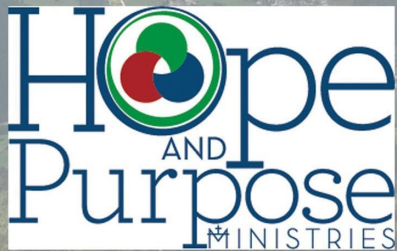
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## The Value of the Gift of Tongues

By Dennis Holt

I've written extensively on the Gift of Tongues because I believe it is one of, if not the most important gifts given to us by the Father. To really understand the Gift of Tongues one must first understand the Vision of the Father. If you are one of those people who think the Father's ultimate plan is to get you to heaven then the Gift of Tongues will probably be considered as important to you as head lice. Sitting in a pew every week and waiting to die seems to many a really viable plan for an all-knowing and all-wise God.

Every week, however, we together pray a prayer that Jesus Himself gave to His disciples to pray. Part of it is the mission statement that expresses the Vision of the Father. It goes like this:

**“Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...”**

Ever wonder how that's going to happen? Are we just going to wake up one morning and realize that the Kingdom of God came to earth overnight?

When Jesus came to this earth He taught one thing- the Kingdom of God.

**I must preach the Kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent** – Luke 4:43

And when He sent His disciples out what did He tell them to preach?

**“As you go, proclaim this message: The Kingdom of God is at hand”** – Matthew 10:7.

Jesus came to restore the Kingdom of God on earth that Adam had lost in the Garden but to do that He needed us to be filled with His Spirit so that we would know about the Kingdom, how it works, and how to help Him bring it to fruition. Jesus is very emphatic about this as He strongly admonishes us to seek the Kingdom and the Father's righteousness above all else.

**Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you** – Matthew 6:33.

He didn't say second or third or every once in a while; He said first. Is that happening? How many sermons or homilies have you heard on the Kingdom of God? How much do you know about the Kingdom of God? Is it the first thing you seek? To be ignorant of the Kingdom of God is to be ignorant of Pentecost and the reason for the Gift of Tongues. On Pentecost Sunday you will hear numerous homilies given on how the Church began on Pentecost and yet what happened on Pentecost is rarely mentioned in the church today. If it was important when the church started shouldn't it be important now? I submit to you it is because we are no longer about building the Kingdom of God on earth.

If you are going to build anything you have to convey to the builders what to build and how to build it. Imagine anyone building anything and not being able to convey to the person building it what you want done. That was the Father's position on the day of Pentecost. The first part of His Vision was to get the Spirit of God into His children (those responsible for building the Kingdom on

on earth). Praise God, Jesus made that available to us through His death and resurrection. Then He said this:

**Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send Him to you – John 16:7.**

When you made Jesus the Lord of your life do you think the Holy Spirit was through with you? So many people do and not only do they think the Holy Spirit is through with them, they want nothing to do with His Gifts. They do not realize that every one of those Gifts, especially the Gift of Tongues, have been given to us to help the Spirit of God build the Kingdom on earth.

Because of Adam's sin, he lost the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament the Spirit overshadowed prophets, priests and kings and shared with them His instructions, but His ideal plan was spoken to us by the prophet Joel:

**And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out MY Spirit on ALL FLESH; your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men will see visions – Joel 2:28.**

That's exactly what happened on Pentecost. Even Peter stood up and quoted the prophet Joel and stated that this is the prophecy fulfilled (Acts 2:17). Because of Jesus, every person can now have the precious Holy Spirit living in their hearts. But, if He's living there and you can't hear His Voice or understand Him when He talks to you how are you going to understand your part in building the Kingdom? God knew this, so on Pentecost the Father gave us the very Gift that would train us to hear and understand the Voice of the Holy Spirit – the Gift of Tongues.

**When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance – Acts 2:1-4.**

In other words, the Spirit gave them the words to pray. That is the beauty and the power of the Gift of Tongues. If you will receive the Gift and use it often, in time you will begin to not only hear but recognize the Voice of the Holy Spirit when He talks to you. That is the major reason for the Gift of Tongues. There is much more than that but I am limited by my space. Let me close with this statement by Jesus.

**But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’” – Matthew 4:4.**

Is that you? Are you living on every word that comes from God's mouth? If not, how do you expect to get to that point? I hate to burst your bubble but sitting in a pew once a week is not going to cut it. The Father, however, has a plan to help you get there. This Pentecost do yourself a great favor and find someone who can pray for you to receive your Gift of Tongues then find a group of like-minded people you can practice with, learn with, and grow with. You will not be disappointed. I have that on the best authority.

Continued on page 12

Here is one last thought on which to meditate. “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end.” Have you ever prayed this prayer? If we are all in heaven, who is going to take care of this earth if it lasts forever? (Psalm 115:16) Food for thought. DFH

**Go to p13 to find a Prayer Group in your area.  
Learn about the Gifts of the Spirit!**



### ***Mission Statement***

The mission of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Arkansas is to share in and support the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, that is, to stir into flame the grace of Pentecost. We strive to do this by:

- Coming together in prayer groups to celebrate and experience the Father's love, grace, and mercy as it comes to us in the person of Jesus Christ and by gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Leading others to the release of the Spirit in their lives.
- Identifying, fostering, and using the particular charisms each has received.
- Serving one another, families, community, Church, and the world.
- Evangelizing, sharing the Good News by word and example.

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Group Type	Name	City	Contact	Email/Phone
Prayer Group	New Life	Conway	Pat Hoelzeman	501-329-6314
Prayer Group	Heart of Jesus	Fort Smith	Phylis Weisenfels	479-783-0971
Ministry Magnificat	A Ministry to Catholic Women	Hardy	Shirley Heuser	807-856-2543
Prayer Group	Light In the Darkness	Hattieville	Donna McCall	501-354-9786
Prayer Group	Children of God	Hot Springs	Christy Miller	501-318-9242
Prayer Group	Christ the King	Little Rock	Fred & Tammy Woell	501-225-9287
Prayer Group	Holy Souls Prayer Group	Little Rock	Susej Thompson	501-772-2512
Prayer Group	Living Waters	Mena	Dc. Larry Hatch	479-394-5655
Prayer Group	Our God Reigns	North Little Rock	Jerri Miller	501-835-6044
Prayer Group	The Friends of Jesus	Pine Bluff	Jim & Joanne Rinchuso	870-879-3555
Prayer Group	St. Paul	Pocahontas	Dennis & Janet Holt	870-892-9473
Prayer Group	Praise and Worship	Russellville	Marion Hotz	479-967-4296
Prayer Group	Glory of Zion	Subiaco	Fr. Mark Stengel OSB	479-934-1169
Prayer Group	Merciful Heart	Rogers	Rebecca Brandes	316-258-2583
Prayer Group	Holy Family	Hot Springs	Ruth Sliger	501-282-5292