

A Reflection on the Holy Spirit following Pentecost (2025)

For NSW Branch Knights of the Southern Cross

By Fr Julian Belich

Picture a group of friends gathered around a campfire on a clear night. The stars are bright, the fire crackles, and stories are shared. Some are funny, some are sad, but the most powerful ones are about moments when something special happened — moments that can't be explained, but felt real and important. That's what the Holy Spirit is like: God's gentle power, moving in our lives in quiet but amazing ways.

Someone, feeling lost and alone, walks down to the beach. The sky is dark, the waves crash, and the world feels empty. Suddenly, a gentle warmth fills their heart—a quiet whisper says, "You are not alone." Tears come, not from sadness, but from feeling loved and comforted. Later, they realise: "That night, I met the Holy Spirit—not as an idea, but as a friend." The Catechism reminds us, "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Romans 5:5; CCC 733).

Long ago, Jesus' friends were hiding in a room, scared and unsure. Suddenly, a loud sound filled the house, like a strong wind. Little flames appeared above their heads, but no one was burned. They felt brave and started talking about Jesus in languages they didn't know. One of them, who had been afraid, stood up and spoke to a huge crowd. Many believed in Jesus that day. The Church began because the Holy Spirit gave them courage. The Catechism calls Pentecost "the fullness of the Holy Spirit's revelation" (CCC 731), and says the Spirit "builds, animates, and sanctifies the Church" (CCC 747).

A person sits quietly in church, carrying a heavy sadness. One Easter night, the church is dark. The priest lights a big candle, and everyone shares the flame. When their candle is lit, a deep peace fills the heart, as if the darkness inside is gone. “I knew the Holy Spirit was with me,” they think. The Catechism teaches that the Spirit “makes present the mystery of Christ” (CCC 737). “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Someone struggles with a bad temper. After a harsh word to a loved one, they sit alone, feeling terrible. A story comes to mind about asking God to take away anger, but nothing changed—until they stopped fighting and started listening. It becomes clear that the Holy Spirit is gently helping to see the real problem. Instead of fighting the anger, they ask the Holy Spirit for help and slowly become more patient. The Spirit’s help is gentle, never harsh. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23; CCC 736, 1832).

Two neighbours haven’t spoken in years because of an argument. The church needs a new fence, and both are asked to help. As they work together, they start talking, then laughing, and finally forgiving. The fence is fixed, and so are their hearts. The Catechism says, “The Holy Spirit is the principle of every vital and truly saving action in each part of the Body” (CCC 798). The Spirit brings unity and reconciliation, helping us forgive and heal old wounds.

A shy person doesn't like talking to strangers. One day, the priest asks for a visit to a sick neighbour. Nervous, but willing, they go and simply sit and listen. Later, the neighbour says, "When you visited, I felt God's peace." The Holy Spirit can use anyone—even the quietest—to help others. "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:3; CCC 683).

Every time we go to Mass, receive Communion, or go to Confession, the Holy Spirit is there. He makes the bread and wine become Jesus' Body and Blood. He forgives our sins. He fills us with God's love. Think of someone making their first confession. They are scared, but when the priest says, "You are forgiven," they feel lighter and happier. That's the Holy Spirit at work. "Through the sacraments, Christ communicates his Holy and sanctifying Spirit to the members of his Body" (CCC 739).

How Can We Welcome the Holy Spirit?

You may already be experiencing the following:

Tranquil Listening. Taking a few minutes each day to sit quietly and ask, "Come, Holy Spirit."

Asking for help. If you need patience, courage, or peace, just ask the Holy Spirit.

Going to the sacraments. The Holy Spirit is always there, ready to help.

Helping others. The Holy Spirit loves when we serve, forgive, and encourage.

The Catechism offers this prayer:

“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth” (CCC 2671).

The Holy Spirit gives us special gifts to help us live as Christians: wisdom, understanding, courage, and more (CCC 1831). He also helps us show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control—these are called the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; CCC 736, 1832).

Now, think back to the campfire. At first, it’s just a spark. But as everyone adds a little wood, the fire grows. The Holy Spirit is like that fire. When we open our hearts, He grows in us and in our community, bringing warmth, light, and hope to all around us. For the Holy Spirit is God’s gift to us. He is with us in every moment, ready to help, to guide, and to set our hearts on fire with love. Let’s welcome Him every day, and let our lives become stories that build up, animate and sanctify us all, the communion of saints, in fact, we, the Church (the Sacrament of Universal Salvation. (CCC 780).