

Theme of the Week - Pentecost

Sunday is Pentecost Sunday and this is a special feast for the Church. It is called 'Pentecost' because it comes from the Greek 'pentekoste', which means fiftieth and it is celebrated fifty days after Easter and the Passover in the Jewish faith. For Jews, in the Old Testament the fifty days after Passover is the day they celebrate the passing on of the law (the Torah) that they are to follow. For followers of Christ, Pentecost is the birthday of the Church as it is when the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit to then go out and share the Gospels and the teachings of Jesus. And if you think of a birthday, you will normally see gifts, birthday cake and overall happiness. Therefore, Pentecost has something similar, the gift of the Holy Spirit being passed onto the apostles through fire above their heads so they too could go out and bring the happiness of Jesus into the lives of others.

Pentecost was a Jewish feast day celebrated fifty days after Passover. This is why so many were in Jerusalem at the time the Holy Spirit manifested in the lives of the apostles. It might be expected that the absence of Jesus would have caused the newly formed gathering of believers to collapse and disappear, and we know from Scripture that at least some of them had left Jerusalem to return to their homes. But despite their anxiety and sense of having been left behind, a group of about one hundred and twenty believers had gathered to pray in the upper room together. Jesus appears amongst them offering his greeting of peace and the opportunity to confirm his presence by examining his wounds. The conferring of the Holy Spirit was intimate between Jesus and the fearful apostles as He breathed life back into them. The effect of this gentle action is nevertheless powerful. Filled with courage and fervour the apostles are to go out and continue Jesus' work of forgiveness, good news, and witness in the world. The Spirit will teach them new things, lead them deeper into the mystery of Jesus and help them to understand the things to come as they take up the challenges that lie ahead.

Coming to faith is a journey for most of us as we discover God's existence within the realities of our life experiences. This happens mainly through prayer and reflection. Just as the apostles gathered to pray when they were anxious, it is important for us to gather within our faith community to share the highs and the lows of our journey. This Friday we do this in abundance as we not only come together as we normally do but we also get to celebrate our Multicultural Day at St Joseph's and recognise and rejoice in all the different nationalities and cultures that make up our school community. Would someone like to share a prayer in another language? We get to learn about ourselves, who we are, where our ancestors came from but also share this with others so they get to know more about us as we get to know more about them. This allows us to learn new experiences, customs and traditions and enriches us as a person by bestowing knowledge upon us of our friends and making us more compassionate and understanding. When Jesus appeared and breathed the Holy Spirit into his friends, this experience was totally life changing. How do you use the Spiritual gifts you have been given in your identity in service of others? What fruits of the Spirit are manifested most in those closest to you?

Pentecost

Weekly Reflections
19th May 2024



A reading from the Gospel of St John (20:19-23)

In the evening of the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you.'

'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Prayer for the Week

Almighty God,

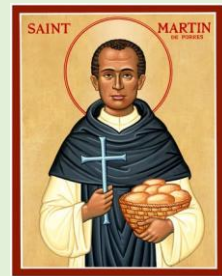
Come to us through the Holy Spirit breathing new fire into our hearts, new energy into our lives, and new life into our souls.

Transform our fear, anxiety and doubt filling us with confidence and faith.

Move in us, we pray

Amen

Saint of the week - St Martin de Porres



Martin was born in Lima, Peru. He was a child of mixed race heritage, his mother a black women from Panama and his father a Spanish hidalgo. Due to Peruvian law, those of African or Indian descent were barred from taking holy orders, so Martin applied for the position of 'donado' a volunteer who performs menial tasks at the Convent of the Rosary. Eventually he was allowed to take his vows and became a Dominican lay brother at 34. He ministered to all equally and once gave a beggar his own bed saying compassion is preferable to cleanliness.

Martin was:

**Loving and
Compassionate**

Day 1

What feelings, sights or sounds do you normally associate with a birthday?

Why do we celebrate birthdays?

Why do you think Pentecost is the birth of the Church?

Day 2

Why do you think some of the followers of Jesus left in fear when he was no longer on earth?

Why is the Holy Spirit so important in alleviating those fears?

Day 3

Speak to others in your class and ask them about their culture and identity. Is it similar or different to yours?

What gifts do they share with you?

Express your love and faith in God by saying the Lord's Prayer in your home language