

Memorial Day is a day to pay tribute for those serving in the military to protect our great country. To remember those who have scarified their life so that you may live as free people.

The date was June 6, 1944 also known as D-Day. As the ships headed for the coast of Normandy, France; Stars and Stripes flew high above the ships.

As the ships closed in toward the beach; one by one the soldiers got off the ships and they were met with bullets flying in every direction, and the dead were everywhere. For many hours the US soldiers fought and sacrificed to take control of the beachhead.

Normandy was bought and paid for with the blood of US Soldiers who stormed the beach and scaled the hills and cliffs to secure it from the enemy. The US had defeated the western wall of Germany. At the end of the day, old glory was proudly displayed. She brought liberty for Europe.

Forever as the stars and stripes goes, she comes to bring freedom and liberty.

The day of Pentecost in a sense was also about freedom—the Spirit giving His living breath. And filled with the Spirit, God's people become alive, unable to be silent, confessing and proclaiming Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead. Pentecost forever changed the New Testament Church.

Pentecost was a feast that God had commanded, it was a feast that many Jews traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate. In Acts 2, we find the Jews gathering for Pentecost 50 days after Jesus rose from the dead—the infant New Testament Church was on the cusp of many changes.

This infant Church didn't yet know how Jesus fulfilled the Old Covenant feast of Pentecost. On that feast day, there was the New Testament Church, all gathered in one place, surrounded by Jews from all over the Roman World.

Jewish visitors and pilgrims filled Jerusalem. These were people who had fled Israel during the previous 600 years because of oppression and war.

So, on the day of Pentecost, the 120 followers of Jesus would've been mostly unnoticed among the tens of thousands who flooded the city.

Yet, God would do something miraculous that day. He would send His Holy Spirit through His Son, just as Jesus had promised. That would begin a new feast in the Church's life, also known as Pentecost.

All the disciples were together on that first Pentecost day, and the sound of a mighty, rushing wind—the breath of God filled the room. As they looked at one another, they saw what looked like tongues of fire resting on each one of them.

Suddenly, as if swept up by the wind, they were outside. Others were near the house where they were, for they, too, heard the mighty wind and were curious. And what did they see? They saw the apostles speaking in different languages.

And on Pentecost, tongues of fire rested on the 12 apostles, and the Holy Spirit lived and moved in them all. And then they began to speak in various languages and dialects.

On Pentecost, we see a beautiful picture of the Church. All the Christians that day confessed Jesus to others. But it was the Apostle Peter who stood up and preached.

Acts 2:17-18, 21 “And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

²¹And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

If Jesus' crucifixion wasn't enough to make the point that the Jerusalem Temple no longer served its purpose, Pentecost confirmed it.

For the Temple would no longer be the place of God's Holy Spirit. In the Old Covenant, God revealed Himself to His people in the Ark of Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

In the Old Covenant, the Temple was the primary place where the Holy Spirit made Himself known.

But because of Pentecost, each Christian is now a temple of the Holy Spirit. As God breathed life into Adam, and he became a living being.

On that first Pentecost, Christ breathes the Holy Spirit of life into His people, and His people become spiritually alive in the New Covenant.

But there can be a danger of letting Pentecost captivate us for the wrong reasons. After all, Pentecost is exciting. We might imagine what it would be like to have tongues of the Holy-Spirit of fire resting on us.

We might imagine what it would be like, instantaneously speaking in other languages by inspiration of the Holy Spirit

But what was the focus of Pentecost? It was Jesus. That's what Peter preached, and that's whom the people believed in that day. The Holy Spirit wants us to look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith.

The Holy Spirit works in the preached Word of Christ. In the hearing of His forgiveness, in holy baptism, and in His body and blood. In the New Covenant, that's where God has promised to be and work.

And so that's where the Holy Spirit is active and working! That's where Pentecost is happening today, here and now, for you.

Speaking of the Holy Spirit, we see how active the Holy Spirit is in the life of the church today.

In the Divine Service, when the Holy Spirit leads us repent of all of our sins, and receive absolution from the pastor as from God Himself.

1. The Holy Spirit is at work in your life in Holy Baptism.

Romans 6:4, 6-8 "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him."

What does that mean? It means that your baptism is your Pentecost. Every time you hear the Word of Christ coming to you in your own language, that's also your Pentecost.

2. The Holy Spirit is at work in your daily life, especially in your vocations.

The Lord uses your God-given talents and abilities to carry out the work you do everyday and to benefit those around you.

St Paul writes in **Ephesians 4:28** to do faithful and honest work with your own hands, so that you may have something to share with anyone in need.

3. The Holy Spirit is at work in helping your neighbor and those around you.

Romans 12:9-17 “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality...

...Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.”

The continuing work and life of Pentecost are in the Word that brings repentance and faith in Jesus--just like at the first Pentecost!

On that first Pentecost day, a group of 3,000 heard Peter preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified, they repented of all their sins, and were brought to faith into the Church through the waters of baptism.

St. Luke tells us in **Acts 2:42** after Pentecost, those first Christians “Devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

Sometimes we show little proof that we are living as post-Pentecost Christians (and I don't mean all the ridiculous nonsense that, today, passes for being filled with the Spirit).

Today, we are often more like the fearful and doubting disciples before Pentecost. Christianity without Pentecost is only an empty shell!

If the Holy Spirit doesn't permeate our lives with His presence, then our faith is just going through empty motions! If God's Word doesn't have its way with us, then our Christian life is one without power!

As Peter preached on Pentecost, so I preach to you: repent! Turn from your sins. Return to your baptism. Leave your idols, and your vices behind and come begging for mercy from the King of the Jews.

Remember the importance of praying on all occasions and getting your Bible out each and every day to read, and inwardly digest God's Word.

On this Memorial Day weekend never forget those who served and still serve today, to make us a free people, those who defended our country and those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Galatians 5:13-14 "For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Galatians 5:22-25 ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

Today, that same Spirit at Pentecost is also here, working among us, and delivering the peace that Jesus won for us on the cross.

John 14:26-27 The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Jesus Christ crucified and risen for You. Today, tomorrow, and every day.
Amen

