

PFINGSTEN / PENTECOST

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why Haven't I Heard of Pentecost?

In many evangelical churches that do not have a developed liturgical year, Pentecost is an ignored Church holiday (ranking it up there with [Lent](#) and [Epiphany](#)). Nonetheless, many evangelicals are discovering the Church year. Pentecost is a perfect time for Christians of all denominations to focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in their individual lives and in their worshipping communities, while commemorating the beginning of the Church some 2000 years ago. In many evangelical churches in the United States, the secular Mother's Day holiday is probably celebrated more frequently than the ancient and revered Christian Pentecost feast.

2. Is Discussing the Gifts and Charisms of the Spirit appropriate for Pentecost?

Certainly. In fact, many charismatic Catholics emphasize Pentecost as a time for personal and corporate spiritual renewal. Many modern Catholics are suspicious of claims of miracles and spiritual gifts because materialist science has taught us that they are impossible. However, the Church has never ceased believing in these charisms. The Holy Spirit's operations both individually and corporately (in the Church) are often misunderstood, especially in some modern Protestant churches, where "having the Holy Spirit" is synonymous with an adrenaline rush or histrionic behavior. Catholic and liturgical churches have never disavowed the works of the Holy Spirit, nor should we cease from praying for the Holy Spirit's guidance and illumination. Catholics see the Holy Spirit working in a variety of ways: through baptism, charity, prayer, ordination, faith, exorcism, service, etc, and speaking in tongues is one of the many workings of the Holy Spirit, and even then, according to St. Paul, one of the lesser gifts. Thus, just because one is not dancing in the aisles at Mass, or speaking an unknown language, doesn't mean the Holy Spirit is absent. For Catholics, living one's vocation in love is evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit; one need not be showy or emotional.

3. Are Catholics Pentecostal?

The term Pentecostal is often used as a synonym for "charismatic," although we must note that generally the term "Pentecostal" refers to American Christian groups founded in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that emphasize speaking in tongues, healings, and spontaneous worship. Some of these groups even deny the Trinity, and baptize in the name of Jesus. Catholic and Apostolic Christians cannot claim the title "pentecostal" in this sense. However, the word "Pentecostal," in a generic sense, just means "relating to Pentecost," i.e. having the Holy Spirit *and* the Church. Thus, those who are baptized and confirmed in the Church are, by definition, Pentecostals. However, most self-professed Pentecostals would deny that Catholics have a claim to this title.