

Moved by the Spirit



At the end of May, the Catholic Church will celebrate **Pentecost**. This significant feast day in the Church's calendar falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter and celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples (Acts 2:1-41).

For a long-time Catholic like myself, this description of Pentecost and what the Holy Spirit did seems to just roll off the tongue. But for someone who is thinking about becoming a Catholic, or indeed for anyone who has never given much thought to the Holy Spirit, some deeper reflection might be called for.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Catholic Christians believe in a "Trinitarian God". That is, God is both one, and three persons at the same time – Father, Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. This is a mystery, which is not meant so much to be solved, but to be pondered, reflected upon and experienced.

The Holy Spirit has existed for eternity. In the first book of the Bible, we read that God's Holy Spirit hovered over the earth at creation (Genesis 1:2). Throughout the Bible we read that the Holy Spirit was a constant sign that God was always present within the hearts and minds of God's people. Then, when Jesus told his friends – the disciples – that he was no longer going to be physically present to them, they were afraid (John 14:15-17). So Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would come down upon each of them and stay with them. The Holy Spirit would give them the strength to go out into the world and tell everyone about God's love for them.

How is the Holy Spirit at work in the world? Because the Holy Spirit can't be physically seen, we are invited to enter the realm of transcendence – that is, where we experience something beyond the normal or physical level.

For some people, describing something as being transcendent is an indication of craziness or foolishness.

But, let me put this to you to think about. Has your heart ever been moved by love? Has something inside you stirred as you listened to a beautiful piece of music? Have you been mesmerised by a glorious sunrise or sunset? Have you been moved to tears at the loss of a loved one? Have you ever found the inner strength or courage to overcome a battle, or to graciously accept defeat?

The truth is that things happen in our life which cause something inside us to be "moved"; we can't see that movement, but we can feel it. It is transcendent. When these movements are good, true and beautiful, be assured that the Holy Spirit is at work.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

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