

Pentecost (A)

May 24, 2026

“God, the Great Harmonizer”

One of the ways brain experts tell us we can stay sharp in our older years is to work on puzzles. Puzzles, made of various pieces, make up beautiful pictures, but they require our concentration and an ability to fit individual pieces into a greater whole.

You could call God “the great puzzle solver.” He solves and resolves the puzzles of life. He is, in fact, the answer to the puzzle of life. Pentecost is about the Spirit of God in action: in the world he created, in the Church Jesus founded, and in our hearts.

First, the Spirit is at work **in creation**. The psalmist tells us, “*When you send forth your Spirit, they are created*” (104:30). God is the source of all creation. But you might ask yourself, “What does the Spirit do in creation? What does the Spirit do now that creation is here?” Saint Basil the Great tells us: “If you attempt to remove the Spirit from creation, all things become confused.” That is the role of the Spirit: as Pope Francis said, “to bring creation from disorder to order, from dispersion to cohesion, from confusion to harmony” (homily on Pentecost, 28 May 2023) You could sum up the Spirit’s role in creation with the word “harmony.” The Spirit harmonizes or brings things together. That is his style.

There is so much discord and division in our world. We are all connected through social media, and yet so many are isolated and alone. Wars in Iran, Lebanon, Ukraine, Nigeria, and other places create devastation and death. The ultimate power that fuels war is the great divider, the devil himself. The devil loves injustice, conflict, hatred, envy, slander, misinformation, and discord, and is the invisible author of the confusion of tongues at Babel, as recounted in Genesis. The Holy Spirit is poured out to bring unity and peace to a divided and war-torn world. When man goes to war against the environment through pollution and waste of natural resources, the Spirit brings healing and hope.

Along with his work in creation, the Holy Spirit is at work **in the Church**. Saint Luke recounts the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came in the form of a driving wind, flames of fire, and tongues of language. You will notice that the Church did not begin with a plan, program, process, or procedure, but instead with God

pouring particular graces and charisms on the chosen Apostles in the Upper Room. At Pentecost, God came in wind to move the sails of our hearts, in fire to set us aflame with light and love, and in tongues to touch the peoples of the world.

God did not eliminate the tongues created at Babel, but instead provided a linguistic bridge to communicate with Arabs, Cretans, Parthians, Medes, Egyptians, and Romans, and various other peoples. The Spirit does not eliminate cultural differences, but gives each of us the means to communicate with others, thus harmonizing the Church.

The Spirit did not begin with a detailed 10-point program, but with charisms and gifts that we are called to share with others. And that work continues on the Journey in Faith.

Archbishop Zinkula recently noted the following as he travels across the archdiocese, “I encounter parishioners who are stepping forward, committees that are choosing hope over fear, and faithful people who sincerely desire to strengthen the Church for future generations. I hear conversations rooted in love for the Eucharist, concern for welcoming others, and a willingness to ask how we can better live the mission Christ has given us” (On Mission, 5/22). These are fruits of the Holy Spirit at work in the Church. Without him, the Church is cold, faith is mere obedience, morality is mere duty, and pastoral work is mere drudgery.

Finally, the Holy Spirit creates harmony **in our hearts**. We see this in John’s Gospel, on Easter night, when Jesus breathes on the Apostles and communicates the Spirit. He gives the Spirit to forgive sins, to reconcile people, and to harmonize hearts wounded by sin, broken by cruelty, and led astray by Satan’s accomplices.

Pope Francis, on one Pentecost, asked some good reflection questions in this area: “Am I docile to the harmony of the Spirit? Do I pursue my own projects, without letting myself be shaped by God? Am I quick to judge, to point fingers, slam doors, slander reputations when others anger me? Do I foster reconciliation and build communion, or am I always causing hurt and division?” Good questions!

God is the great puzzle solver who calls us to trust and be transformed together. Through the intercession of Mary, Spouse of the Spirit, may he bring harmony to creation, to the Church, and to our hearts once again.

Happy Pentecost, and God bless you.