

Day of Pentecost

May 24, 2026

Acts 2:1-21

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Come Holy Spirit come. Come and empower us to do things that we would never do without your pushing and prodding. Come Holy Spirit, come, teach us to say things that we would never have said ourselves. Come, Holy Spirit come, disrupt our settled, stable world with your life-giving power. Amen.

I am glad you are here on this special day of celebration, this Sunday that is called the Day of Pentecost. Pentecost is the fiftieth and final day of the season of Easter in the Church. It is on this day that we celebrate the beginning of the Church and recall what happened when another group of people were together a long time ago and God did something that we are still trying to figure out. A few minutes ago, we listened to a reading from the book of Acts that tells the story of what those people heard and what they felt that day when they were in a house in Jerusalem. We heard about how they experienced a violent rush of wind, tongues of fire and as we were told that *all of them were filled with the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:4). I am going to read the first part of that story again from another version of the Bible.

On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting. Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there. The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak. Everyone was excited and confused. Some of them even kept asking each other, "What does all this mean?"

(Acts 2:1-4, 12). What does all of this mean? What does it mean to have the Holy Spirit take control?

When we hear something described as being like a wild goose chase, we usually associate that term with something that is hard to find or as difficult to catch as a wild goose. Have you ever been on a wild goose chase? I certainly have and if you have then you know that being on one can feel like a hopeless pursuit, a search for something that is impossible to find (The Oxford Dictionary). It usually involves following a path that ultimately leads nowhere. But it has been pointed out that the original concept of a wild goose chase didn't have anything to do with chasing wild geese. Instead, it involved chasing after someone or being chased yourself like a wild goose ("Etymology of a wild goose chase," Meryl Natchez, Poetry and More, 1/9/25).

Have you ever thought of the Holy Spirit as a wild goose? I doubt that many of us have thought about God's Spirit in that way and some of us might be offended by that kind of description or think it is sacrilegious but there was a group of early Christian people who did. This interesting name for the Holy Spirit comes from the Celtic tradition of Christianity which developed in the British Isles during the 5th and 6th centuries. Celtic Christians saw the way that God works and acts and specifically the movements of the Holy Spirit in a much different way. They saw the Holy Spirit as being something that can be disruptive and surprising, something that moves in our lives in unexpected ways similar to the way a wild goose moves and acts ("Why is a wild goose a symbol of the Holy Spirit? Philp Kosloski, Aleteia, 06/08/25).

In his book called Wild Goose Chase, Mark Batterson describes talks about this idea of the Holy Spirit as a wild goose and he says that when he first heard about the term being used he did think it sounded sacrilegious but then began to realize that it is actually a great description of what it means to live a spirit led life. It is like a wild goose chase. *You aren't going to know*, Batterson

says, *where you are going most of the time but that also goes by another name – adventure. In my experience, take the Holy Spirit out of the equation of your life and it spells boring. Add it into the equation of your life and you never know where you are going to go, what you are going to do, or who you are going to meet.* (“Christians on a Wild Goose Chase,” Chris Carpenter, CBN).

No one knows for sure what happened in Jerusalem on that first day of Pentecost. There was certainly no way to document the event, there were no pictures, but this we do know. Whatever happened was so powerful so life changing, that a group of people who had been doing what Jesus had told them to do in the days following his death and resurrection, were blown away when the Holy Spirit came rushing in. In a phenomenal and life changing way, they experienced the power, the presence and the direction of God and they were filled with the Spirit of God. What happened was something so impactful that they were changed and from that point on that group of people knew what they were supposed to do with their lives.

The Spirit of God that blew in that day and filled the place where those people were and filled them, was what they had been waiting for. The Spirit of God that blew in that day pushed them out from where they had been and into places where they probably did not expect they would go, to do things they may not have ever thought they would do or maybe wanted to do. The wind of God that blew that day moved them beyond themselves and pushed them more deeply into who they were as people who had given their lives to follow Jesus Christ.

All of them, we are told, every one of them **were filled with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2:4). That is the way in which the creative power and energy of what God did is described as moving around and in and through those who were in Jerusalem that day. It is that same creative power and energy that you and I can experience as the Holy Spirit is constantly doing things with us,

things that we often mistakenly refer to as being coincidence. The Holy Spirit is the way in which we can come to know the power and presence of God in the church and through other people that we interact with. The Holy Spirit is the force, the drive, that is present and working to fill and invigorate people like you and me and to empower us with the good news of the hope and love of God in Jesus. What God wants from you and me is to be receptive to that Spirit which has been implanted by God deep within us. Within you and me there is God, wanting to be known by us, empowering us, wanting us to be pursued, chased by us.

In an article she has written titled “Wild Goose Chase,” Ashlyn Ohm says that, like a wild goose *the Holy Spirit operates in a realm outside of everyday life*. Like a wild goose the Holy Spirit is mysterious and unpredictable, and most importantly, the Holy Spirit is uncontrollable. Like a wild goose, *it cannot be manipulated, captured, or tamed*. It can *only be pursued* (“Wild Goose Chase - Words from the Wilderness,” <https://share.google/BLKWNuS3AaV1wYD2I>). The message of this day of Pentecost is a powerful and profound message that the Holy Spirit is in the here and now of our lives. God is in the here and the now of all life and of everything that happens. God is always up to something. It is often mysterious and unpredictable, and it is always uncontrollable, but what God wants from us is to respond to those gentle and sometimes not so gentle nudges and pushes that we feel but sometimes find hard to identify.

The invitation to you and me today, right now, is invitation to let God use us and work with us. So, let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to come, to come like a wild goose. Let’s pray that God will come and fill of us with power, with passion, and with a sense of purpose. As St. Paul reminds us in the book of Romans in the Bible, the Spirit knows us, the Spirit knows our deepest thoughts, and it is searching our hearts to lead and guide us especially at those times when we may not know

what to do or when we feel as if we are on a wild goose chase (Romans 8:26-27). When the Holy Spirit shows up will we be ready and will we be willing to respond to it and pursue it?

I am going to close with something that was written by Sr. Mary Rowell who is a Roman Catholic nun in which she talks about welcoming the Wild Goose, welcoming the Holy Spirit. **Perhaps this Pentecost invites me to go on a “wild goose chase” where not I but the goose does the chasing of me! May I welcome the Wild Goose. May I let God act, call me to be and do something different to risk life in the Spirit, to embrace a dangerous God, but a God, nonetheless, who remains with each of us on the wild wonderful journey.... sending us out like the first disciples, to love and live in freedom and joy** (“Welcoming the Wild Goose: An Invitation for Pentecost, 5/29/20, www.csjcanada.or/blog/welcoming-the-wild-goos-an-invitation-for-pentecost). Let us pray.

Come Holy Spirit come. Come and empower us to do things that we would never do without your pushing and prodding. Come Holy Spirit, come, teach us to say things that we would never have said ourselves. Come, Holy Spirit come, disrupt our settled, stable world with your life-giving power. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.