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Malin Parish: Resources, news and prayers: **Website:** www.malinparish.ie. **Facebook:** Malin Parish

Details on the times of online **Masses and Prayers** for the Covid 19 Crisis : <https://www.catholicbishops.ie>
Mass Leaflets for each Sunday are available in the churches and parish shops along with the weekly Bulletin.

Sincere Thanks to those who have sent in their collection envelopes, cheques and donations for the Parish during the past week. Please make cheques payable to "Malin Parochial".

The Feast of Pentecost: Come, Holy Spirit

There is a period of human history called the Dark Ages. It started in about the fifth century and continued for the next 600 years. You might say it was a 600-year depression – food was scarce, people lived hand-to-mouth – and Western civilisation barely hung by a thread. The one bright spot was the local cathedral. Building cathedrals even in small towns gave work to thousands of people. These buildings became the cultural, social and spiritual centres of life. Murals, stained glass windows, sculptures and pageantry helped teach the great stories of the Bible in a time when very few people could read.

With this in mind some of the cathedrals were built especially to impress on the people the meaning of Pentecost. In the great domed and richly painted ceilings were a number of small carefully disguised doors. During worship on Pentecost when the whole town was gathered in the cathedral, some unlucky parishioners were drafted to climb up on to the roof. At the appropriate moment during the liturgy, they would release a live dove through the one of the small doors. This dove would swoop over the congregation as a living symbol of the presence of the Holy Spirit. At the same time the choir boys would make whooshing noise and the doors in the ceiling would be opened again and this time buckets of rose petals were showered on the congregation, symbolising tongues of flame falling on the worshippers below. You can imagine the impact that this made on the drab and hard lives of those medieval Christians. They may not have been able to read about Pentecost from the Bible but nevertheless this visual demonstration must have left a lasting impression.

There are no trap doors in our roof and be assured you won't need to duck a low flying dove. But like those medieval Christians we need to be impressed again on how important the Holy Spirit is for us.

When life in the church is drab, when our need to reach out to others with the comfort of God's Word is lacklustre, when telling others about Jesus loses its urgency or when our own lives face hardship, we need to be reminded that God has sent us his Spirit. We need to be reminded that God has provided us the help we need to be channels of his love and grace to a violent, self-absorbed, pleasure-seeking, materialistic culture.

The Holy Spirit has been described in many ways.

He is like a breath that blows away the dust and makes everything clean.

He is like refreshing cool water to a parched throat.

He is like a cleansing bush fire that burns away all the thick undergrowth so that something new can rise out of the ashes.

He is like a potter who starts with an odd-shaped lump and moulds and shapes it into something beautiful.

He is like a renovator who uses what is already there and strengthens, refreshes and revitalises what's there.

He is like a loving spouse whispering into an ear reassurances of love and support.

He is like a parent guiding and helping a confused child.

He is like a tour guide who points us in the right direction to see things that we would otherwise have missed.

He is that gentle tap on the shoulder that makes us realise, "Hey, that's me that needs a new beginning and new direction."

He is that fierce shaking that wakes us up; reminds us that there is more to life than earning money, relentlessly pushing ourselves until we are tired, stressed and depressed.

That what the Holy Spirit does – he revitalises, renews, refreshes, empowers, creates, he reminds, he guides, he comforts the church, those in the church and those whom he touches outside the church.

Jesus ascended to heaven. While he was here on earth he was bound by time and space. He was limited to being in one place at any one time. When he re-entered heaven and took up all power and authority again, he sent the Holy Spirit. This Spirit would be the helper of those whom he left behind to carry on his work.

The Spirit of God would promote the good news about Jesus and give his followers the courage to do things that they would have otherwise never dared to do.

Pentecost was never intended to be a once only affair. Instead we are celebrating the fact that the coming of the Holy Spirit is a daily event in the life of each of us and of the church.

The Holy Spirit speaks to us the truth about God and shows us the love of the Father and the self-giving of the Son. He testifies to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God, that he was born in Bethlehem, became a human to save us through his death on the cross and his resurrection from the grave. He guarantees that the promises of God in the Bible are true. For instance, when Jesus says that those who live and believe in him will never die but have eternal life, the Holy Spirit pledges that this is true and is not to be doubted.

The Holy Spirit testifies who we are. We are God's children, we are spirit-filled people. For each of us our Pentecost occurred when we were baptised. Through the water and God's Word of promise we were adopted into God's family, our sins were forgiven and we were assured that we will spend eternity in the joy of heaven. At our baptism we received the Spirit of God who promises that throughout our life's journey, through the twists and turns that life takes us, he is always there. He reminds us that God never gives up on us. He comforts us when we are sad. He lifts us up when we are down.

The Spirit gives us the power to live as children of God. Through the Spirit working in and with us, God is no longer distant and remote; the cross and resurrection of Christ are more than historical events, now they are part of our being. The Holy Spirit makes us realise that God is intimately connected to my life. He is my God; Jesus is my Saviour. He died and rose for me. We are given faith. And that faith relies on God; trusts God to help us in our deepest needs. That Spirit-given-faith moves us to be God's holy and chosen people in everything we say and do.

There are times, however, when we forget who we are.

We let sin, and not the Spirit, affect the way we live our lives. Sin takes control. We fail to show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control – those qualities that are evident when the Spirit controls our lives.

Or we may simply doze off and forget that Jesus gave his church some every important work to do while he is away – to share his love with those who need comfort and care, to reach out to those who need to hear that Jesus is their saviour and that he gave his life to save them.

Or the church may lose sight of its purpose, namely to get God's Word out into the community by whatever means necessary.

It is said that a certain guide lived in the deserts of Arabia who never lost his way. He carried with him a homing pigeon with a very fine cord attached to one of its legs. When in doubt as to which path to take, he threw the bird into the air. The pigeon quickly strained at the cord to fly in the direction of home, and thus led the guide accurately to his goal. So, too, the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, is willing and able to direct us in the best ways to serve God and others. The Spirit is our constant companion when we are faced with difficult decisions. He helps us to live the spirit-filled life as a child of God.

The Spirit binds us together into the church. There can be little doubt that all of us here this morning are all individuals; no one is alike. We have our unique talents and gifts. We come from different backgrounds. In fact we can be so different that it can be hard to agree and get on together.

Nevertheless, it has survived over so many centuries in spite of the diversity of its members. That's what makes the church so special. The Spirit binds us together in order to care for one another, love one another, pray for one another, encourage one another, help one another as we share the Good News about Jesus with others.

Without the Holy Spirit there would be no Christians and no Church. The gospel message would be unknown. The world would be in a mess. There would be no hope of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit is to the Church what air is to every human being. Air surrounds us so completely that we sometimes forget it is there. We breathe it continuously without always realizing what we are doing. So it is with the Holy Spirit. He empowers our lives. He deepens our faith. He motivates our mission. And he demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that God has a plan for all people – to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

On Pentecost, God's promised Holy Spirit descended on all. At our baptism God's Spirit descended upon us. Maybe we've become a little blasé, a little lackadaisical, a little lukewarm. The Spirit wants to work in children, parents, elderly people. He wants to work in you – in all of us – to make us into a church that is living, renewed, refreshed, revitalised to do his work – to be the church, ready with the gospel, ready to draw all people into the warmth of God's presence.