

CATHOLIC HOMILY

# Homily Transcript

*May 24, 2026*

Well, today we celebrate the great solemnity of Pentecost, the third highest of the solemnities within the church. Easter is at the top, Christmas right under that, and Pentecost is the next highest celebration, solemnity in the church. And so it's a very special day, but the focus, and if you notice in the readings and the responsorial psalm and the songs that we sing, the sequence that we sing today, it's all directed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the center stage, so to speak, today. Now, a couple of weeks ago, I was preaching about the Holy Spirit, and because that's the focus of the last half of the season of Lent. Today is the, or excuse me, the season of Easter.

Today is the last day of the Easter season, but the shift focuses to the Holy Spirit. And now, two weeks ago, I quoted Father John Riccardo, who was saying that like, for a lot of people, they have an idea of a relationship with God the Father, they maybe have a relationship with Jesus, but he's like, how do you have a relationship with a bird? What does that mean? What does that look like? Well, I think the understanding of the Holy Spirit is one of the weakest points of theology in the church today, and I think it's one of those things that there's a massive kind of fallout that is existing because, specifically because we do not know the Holy Spirit. So, today I want to talk about that a little bit.

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is a person, just like the Father is a person, the Son is a person, the Holy Spirit is a person, co-equal to the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is God, but the Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son love each other so perfectly, so eternally, that that love that exists between the Father and the Son, that is the Holy Spirit. That's what the Holy Spirit is. The Holy Spirit is a relationship between the Father and the Son that has always existed, always will exist, but it invites you and I into that life of the Trinity. Brothers and sisters, that's what heaven is.

Heaven, we always have this image of heaven with babies and harps and, you know, all that kind of stuff, but like, what is heaven? Heaven is being invited into the inner life of the Trinity. The love of the Father and the Son, and we are perfectly united, brought into that relationship of God without feeling like a stranger, like a foreign body, but naturally invited into that. That is heaven. Now, when it comes to the Holy Spirit and to our readings today, the understanding of the Holy Spirit has kind of developed throughout time.

So, this idea that the Holy Spirit is given by the Father and the Son that is sent, and we notice it, especially last night, and there's a different reading at the vigil of the Gospel where Jesus says, you know, John's just like, well, nobody had received the Holy Spirit yet because Jesus hadn't ascended. And

so, this sense that like Jesus was still here and the Holy Spirit had not come down yet, they just took that for granted in the New Testament. And there are multiple times where St. Paul would end up in a various city, a church that had just been built, and he'd be like, hey, guys, I'm the apostle. Where's the Holy Spirit? And they're like, what's that? We've never heard of it. We don't know what that is.

And so, Paul goes in. He anoints them with Jesus's baptism because they had been anointed with John's baptism, a baptism of repentance. So, he anoints them with Jesus's baptism. He lays his hands on them, anoints them, and the Holy Spirit comes upon them. This happens over and over and over again where they could have baptism, but the Holy Spirit hadn't showed up yet. So, that's what we're talking about. Jesus says, you know, in the Gospel, receive the Holy Spirit who sins you have forgave or forgiven them. I will send the Holy Spirit to you. If you love me, you would rejoice that I am going to my Father because if I don't go, I won't send the Holy Spirit.

So, this idea that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son together. That, you sitting there today in 2026, you're like, okay, big deal. Yep, okay, I'm on board with that. Sounds good to me. But, like, 1,000 years ago, 1,700 years ago, that was kind of a big deal. Like, that is called the filioque controversy. And so, they added filioque meaning and the Son. That's literally what it means. It's what we say in our creed. Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, community of saints, forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the body. Who proceeds from the Father and the Son. That and the Son, that split the Church.

The Greek Orthodox Church, the East that split off from Rome, was because of those words. And the Son. Okay, you think it's the Father and the Son? Well, we're out. And the Church rifted in half. And then you have Constantinople, kind of being the head of the Eastern Orthodox Church. And you have Rome, being the head of the Western Church. And it was a ripped, because of those three words. The Father and the Son. Again, for you and I, we care less. It's not, I doubt any of us has lost sleep over that. But why is that such a big deal? Why does that matter? That the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son? Because the Holy Spirit is relationship.

The Father and the Son, that the Holy Spirit, the relationship between them, they send Him forth upon us. That's the filioque. So here's the thing, guys. So, you and I, when do we receive the Holy Spirit? When do we, hopefully you can go back to your second grade Catechism class. Hopefully you know, when do you and I, here in 2026, when are we supposed to receive the Holy Spirit? When do we claim and when do we understand that we, and you and I, receive that Holy Spirit? The sacrament of confirmation, right? That's, confirmation is the reception of the Holy Spirit. It perfects baptism. Now, here's the thing, and I'd bet \$100 if any of you guys know this, I'll be super impressed.

Because I wasn't clear on this, even myself, even just a few weeks ago. Each of the sacraments gives us a particular grace or particular grace. It's a fact that has an effect, right? The Eucharist, when you receive the Eucharist, it does something to your soul. When you're baptized, it does something to your soul. When you receive confirmation, it does something to your soul. My question to you is, what happens,

what is the effect of confirmation? According to the Catechism, paragraph 1303, there are five specific effects of the sacrament of confirmation. Now, if you're like me, when I was going through confirmation, back in the early 2000s, I was told, confirmation makes you an adult in the faith, right?

That's what we all heard. You're an adult in the faith. You, you're now standing on your own two feet. And maybe there's some truth in that, but that's, that's just a kick in the bucket. That's just a drop. That's just a small portion. You receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fear the Lord. Yeah, I like those. I want some wisdom. Give me that. I'll take it. That's what confirmation does. True, that's not false, but that's not the full effects of confirmation, of the reception of the Holy Spirit. Five things, five things that Catechism says. The first, it's like almost like, it's like a recipe, you know, you read a label and like read the ingredients.

And the first one listed is the most important. You know what I'm saying? It's like, usually sugar, or flour, or whatever. The first ingredient, so to speak. The first effect of confirmation is, I'll give you a hundred dollars to anybody who could guess this. And maybe this doesn't seem so profound, but I'm telling you, my jaw hit the floor when I read this. The first effect of the sacrament of confirmation is it increases our understanding or our acceptance that God is our Father. And Paul talks about that in the letter to the Romans. We've received a spirit of adoption through which we are capable of calling God Abba, Father.

That is the first thing that happens in confirmation as we are drawn more closely to God the Father. The second thing that happens when we receive confirmation is it strengthens our unity to Jesus Christ Himself. The third thing that happens when we receive confirmation, that's the gifts, the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it increases our relationship to the Holy Spirit Himself. The fourth thing that happens when we receive confirmation is it unites us more closely to the body of Christ, the church on earth. In other words, the first four things, well real quickly, the fifth thing is it gives us a holy boldness, and that's what we see on Pentecost.

They receive the Holy Spirit, and they go out, and they're fire and preaching, and everyone's like, these guys are drunk, and they're like, no we're not, we just received the Holy Spirit, and now we're excited and we have to share this. That's the fifth effect of confirmation, but the reception of the Holy Spirit, the fifth, the Holy Boldness. But the first four of them, what are they? Relationship with God the Father, relationship with God the Son, relationship with the Holy Spirit, relationship with the brothers and sisters around us, relationship, relationship, relationship. God the Holy Spirit is relationship. Do you see what's going on here?

Take a look around at the brokenness of humanity in 2026, especially after COVID, the isolation, the stratification, the point where we can no longer even have a dialogue with somebody that happens to disagree with us. Any time, any time I hear, I listen and I hear brokenness within a marriage, animosity, where we can't even talk anymore, always there's an absence or a lack, an imperfection relationship with the Holy Spirit. When parents can no longer speak to their kids and there's a brokenness and relationship there, there's an absence or a lack or an imperfection of relationship with the Holy Spirit.

When siblings can't stand to be in the same room anymore, when we foster and fester resentment and anger towards our boss and we have the little clicks at work and all the, all of those breakdowns in relationship are evidence that the Holy Spirit is not present because the Holy Spirit builds, strengthens, perfects relationship. And at the end of the day, guys, that's what heaven is, it's relationship in, invited into the inner life of the Trinity and being in relationship with our brothers and sisters and worshipping God side by side in heaven. And to the degree where we don't experience that, we are driven out, it's, we can see the stratification.

So when there's division, when there's hatred, when there's animosity, when there's all this kind of stuff, if the Holy Spirit isn't alive, isn't present, isn't welcomed in, isn't invited, don't be shocked when you see relationships break down. But the good news is you and I have, if we've been confirmed, we've received that grace. It's already available to us. It is ours for the taking, ours for the asking. Jesus said ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. It's already available. If you have that sacrament of confirmation, you have the ability to say, come Holy Spirit, I invite you in.

We have a special opportunity today, to that end, that we were gonna be able to celebrate a confirmation and a couple of baptisms today. What, and I can't think of a much better opportunity to be able to celebrate this than on Pentecost. And this is, you see, you just look around and you see the Holy Spirit at work, when relationships are strengthened, when there is a drawing, a pulling towards Jesus, the Holy Spirit is there. I promise you, every time without exception. And so today we get to witness that. We get to participate in that.

And I just ask you, as you get to witness this, this, these two baptisms and this confirmation of two sisters, one in first grade, one in high school, coming to the Lord, coming to the waters of baptism. I just invite you, in the silence of your own heart, make that invitation. Wherever there is brokenness in your life, brokenness and relationship, as you are witnessing this today, silently, and I can't, I can't make you do this, I'm just, it's just an invitation, silently in your own heart, say come Holy Spirit, come Holy Spirit, come Holy Spirit, I give you permission, I invite you in, may my heart be your home, come Holy Spirit.