

TABLE OF CONTENTS

viii	Abbreviations used for the Books of the Bible	27	The New Passover
viii	General Abbreviations	28	Blood and Water
ix	Introduction	29	The Church Fulfills the Covenants and Promises
151	Art and Photo Credits	29	The Church Fulfills the Promise Made After the Fall of Adam and Eve
154	Index	29	The Church Fulfills the Covenant with Noah
		29	The Church Fulfills the Covenant with Abraham
		29	The Church Fulfills the Covenant with Moses
		30	The Church Fulfills the Promises to David
1	Chapter 1:	30	Conclusion
	Introduction to the Church	31	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Augustine: "The Old Testament is Revealed in the New"
2	Introduction	32	Discussion Questions
3	A People Called Together		
3	Defining "Church"	33	Chapter 4:
4	The Church and Creation		The Early Church Through Pentecost
6	The Creation of Humanity	34	Review of Chapter 3
7	Image and Likeness	34	The Resurrection
7	Work and Worship	36	Forty Days of Instruction
8	Salvation History	38	Creating an Apostle
8	Fall From Grace	38	The Day of Pentecost
9	<i>Sidebar:</i> Bl. William Joseph Chaminade and the French Underground	40	The Meaning of the Descent of the Holy Spirit
10	Conclusion	41	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Stephen, The First Martyr
10	Discussion Questions	42	Conclusion
		42	Discussion Questions
11	Chapter 2:	43	Chapter 5:
	God Prepares for His Church		The Apostolic Church
12	Review of Chapter 1	44	Review of Chapter 4
12	The Promise After the Fall	44	St. Paul, A Light for the Gentiles
13	The Covenant with Noah	46	Preaching to All Nations
14	The Covenant with Abraham	46	St. Philip Baptizes the Ethiopian
14	Abraham and Isaac	47	The Vision of St. Peter
16	The Covenant with Moses	47	The Council of Jerusalem
18	The Promise to David	48	Portraits of the Apostles
20	Conclusion	48	St. Peter
20	Discussion Questions	49	St. John
		50	St. Matthew
21	Chapter 3:	50	St. Thomas
	The Church in Light of the Covenants	50	St. James the Lesser
22	Review of Chapter 2	51	St. Andrew, the "First-Called"
22	The Savior and King Is Born	51	Called to Be Apostles
23	The Kingdom of God	52	Conclusion
24	Speaking in Parables	52	Discussion Questions
25	A Kingdom Both Visible and Invisible		
26	Christ Calls the Twelve Apostles		

TABLE OF CONTENTS

53 Chapter 6: Authority in the Church	85 Chapter 9: The Four Marks of the Church: The Church Is One
54 Review of Chapter 5	86 Review of Chapter 8
54 Visible and Invisible	86 The Church Is One
55 The Hierarchical Church	87 Unity in the Mystical Body
55 The Church Hierarchy	88 Wounds to Unity
57 The Papacy	88 Apostasy
58 The Roman Curia	88 Schisms
58 Bishops	89 Heresies in the Early Church
59 The Priesthood	89 Gnosticism
60 The Diaconate	90 Arianism
60 The Church as Teacher	91 The Protestant Reformation
61 <i>Sidebar:</i> United in Faith: Eastern Catholic Churches	92 Towards Greater Christian Unity
62 Discussion Questions	93 <i>Sidebar:</i> Pope St. Leo the Great: "Peter Has Spoken"
	94 Discussion Questions
63 Chapter 7: Church of the Word and the Sacraments	95 Chapter 10: The Four Marks of the Church: The Church Is Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic
64 Review of Chapter 6	96 Review of Chapter 9
64 The Great Commission	96 The Second Mark: The Church Is Holy
65 Entrusted with the Word	96 Sanctity in the Church
66 The Seven Sacraments	97 Sinners in the Church
67 Baptism	98 The Third Mark: The Church Is Catholic
68 Confirmation	100 The Fourth Mark: The Church Is Apostolic
68 Eucharist	101 <i>Sidebar:</i> Early Account of the Mass
70 Penance	102 Conclusion
71 Anointing of the Sick	102 Discussion Questions
72 Holy Orders	
72 Matrimony	103 Chapter 11: The Church in the Life of the Faithful: The Universal Call to Holiness
73 <i>Sidebar:</i> St. John Vianney	104 Review of Chapter 10
74 Conclusion	104 Cooperating with Grace
74 Discussion Questions	105 Living Our Common Priesthood
	106 The Vocation of the Laity
75 Chapter 8: Names and Images of the Church	107 Universal Call to Holiness
76 Review of Chapter 7	109 The Church as Sanctifier
76 The Church as Sacrament	110 Salvation Outside the Church?
78 Other Images of the Church	110 Conclusion
79 The Church as the Mystical Body of Christ	111 <i>Sidebar:</i> St. Gianna Beretta Molla
79 The Church as the Bride of Christ	112 Discussion Questions
80 The Church as the Family of God	
82 The Church as the People of God	
83 <i>Sidebar:</i> Sheep and Shepherd	
84 Conclusion	
84 Discussion Questions	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

113	Chapter 12: The Church in the Life of the Faithful: Holiness in Daily Life	133	Chapter 14: Mary, Mother of the Church and Our Mother
114	Review of Chapter 11	134	Review of Chapter 13
115	Prayer	134	The Woman
116	Practicing Self-Denial	135	Mother of God
116	Virtues	137	The Immaculate Conception
117	Witnesses for Christ	138	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
118	Following Christ in Our Everyday Life	139	Mary, Mother of the Church
118	In Our Family Life	140	Mary, Help of Christians
119	At Work and in School	140	Queen of Heaven
120	In Society	141	<i>Sidebar:</i> Mary as Mother of the Church
121	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Thomas More	142	Conclusion
122	Discussion Questions	142	Discussion Questions
123	Chapter 13: The Church as the Communion of Saints	143	Chapter 15: Challenges to the Church
124	Review of Chapter 12	144	Review of Chapter 14
124	The Church as the Communion of Saints	144	Apologetics
124	Who are the Saints?	145	1. Why do I have to be Catholic? Aren't all religions equal?
126	Models of Living	146	2. Isn't the Church hypocritical telling other people to be holy and avoid sin when many Catholics, including clergy, are guilty of terrible wrongs?
126	Intercessors	147	3. Who needs organized religion? Isn't it better to worship God in my own way, when and how I want?
127	The Last Things	149	4. How can the Catholic Church sustain the unity of her members in an ever-changing and diverse world?
127	Death	150	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Josemaria Escriva, Founder of Opus Dei
127	The Particular Judgment	150	Discussion Questions
127	Purgatory		
128	Hell		
129	Heaven		
130	The General Judgment		
131	Conclusion		
131	<i>Sidebar:</i> St. Michael the Archangel		
132	Discussion Questions		

The Church

Sacrament of Salvation



Chapter 4

The Early Church Through Pentecost

The Holy Spirit enlightens and empowers the Church to fulfill the apostolic mission given her by Christ.

CHAPTER 4

The Early Church Through Pentecost

OPENING ACTIVITY

Free write for a few minutes on anything in your past experience that was very hard for you to learn. It could be a fact, a skill, or even a life lesson. What was it? Why was it difficult? Did you actually finally learn it? If so, how?

This activity is meant to make you consider how the Apostles, who were given the task of heading the Church, “learned” how to do this.

BASIC QUESTIONS

This chapter attempts to answer the following basic questions:

- ✦ What is the significance of the Great Commission for the Church?
- ✦ Why did Christ appear to the Apostles after the Resurrection?
- ✦ What did the Apostles do for the Church while waiting for the Holy Spirit?
- ✦ What is the significance of Pentecost for the Church?

KEY IDEAS

The key ideas of this chapter are:

- ✦ Just as at the Incarnation the Father sent Christ into the world to redeem it, after the Resurrection Christ commissioned the Apostles to go to the entire world to preach the Gospel in order to save it.
- ✦ Christ gave the Apostles final instructions during the forty days after the Resurrection to prepare them for their task of making disciples, baptizing, and teaching Divine Revelation.
- ✦ The Apostles, led by Peter, created a new Apostle to take Judas’s place.
- ✦ Pentecost was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Church, which gave her the power to evangelize.

Review of Chapter 3:

- ✦ Christ fulfills the promise of a Redeemer made in the *Protoevangelium* of Genesis.
- ✦ Christ is a king, but of a Kingdom not of this world, the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom of God is a mystery: It is the state of communion between God and humanity; Christ calls every person to enter his kingdom through faith and repentance; his kingdom is the Church herself.
- ✦ Christ established the Church during his public ministry on earth. He announced that the Kingdom of God was “at hand”; he formed his Apostles as her first leaders, with St. Peter as head of the Church; he empowered them and commissioned them to continue his work of redemption; he instituted the New Passover (Mass), the priesthood, and the Sacraments in order to sanctify his people and remain present among them.
- ✦ The covenants God made with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, along with the promises he made to Adam and David, all helped prepare the way for the New Covenant in Christ and the foundation of his Church. All these promises and covenants are fulfilled in Christ and the Church he established.

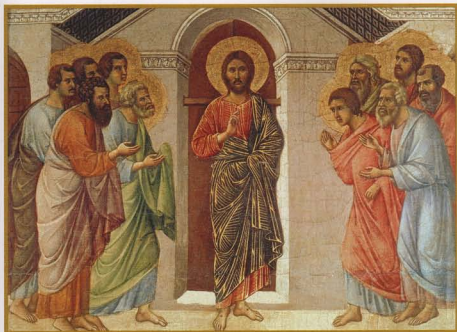
In this chapter, we will look at the experiences of the Apostles and the faithful of Christ from the time of the Resurrection of Christ to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which marks the beginning of the public ministry of the Church.

THE RESURRECTION

In the Old Testament, we can see how the process of gathering and forming the Jews into a people in preparation for the coming Messiah and the promised redemption was a long process. It took centuries for the ancient People of God to be brought along by God’s Revelation to a point where they were ready to receive the Son of God into their midst—and even then imperfectly, for many rejected him.

In a somewhat similar manner, it took time for the Apostles to understand more fully who Christ was and what he wanted them to do. Their questions throughout the Gospels reveal a knowledge of Christ and his mission that unfolded only gradually and that remained incomplete at the time of Christ’s Death. Even at the Resurrection, the meaning of the Kingdom of God had not fully dawned on them. They needed something more to help them understand the truth that Christ was trying to teach them and to carry out the sacred mission Christ had in mind for them. They needed the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus Christ had greatly confused the Apostles and disciples. Earlier that week, they had triumphantly entered Jerusalem with Christ. Enthusiastic crowds lined their path, laying down palm branches before him and honoring him with their cheers and prayers: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the king of



Appearance Behind Locked Doors by Duccio.
Christ told them to be at peace because of what he had accomplished.

Israel!" (Jn 12: 13). Then, a few days later, after celebrating the Passover meal with his Apostles, Christ was betrayed and arrested, and on the following day, tried, sentenced, scourged, put to death by crucifixion, and sealed in a tomb. All the Apostles but one abandoned him for fear of being arrested themselves. Judas, who betrayed Christ, hung himself afterward.

Grief-stricken and remorseful for their lack of loyalty, the Apostles hid in the same Upper Room where they had shared Christ's Last Supper. Then reports came from the women who had gone to anoint the body of Christ: They had seen Christ alive, and his tomb was empty! Skeptical at first, Peter and John ran to investigate. Finding the tomb indeed empty, they tried to make sense of it.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." (Jn 20: 19-21)

Why did Christ offer them "peace"? The disciples were confused and anxious, and initially a bit frightened at the sight of Christ. Christ told them to be at peace because of what he had accomplished: He had restored the friendship between God and humanity. Because he was God, Christ not only wished them peace, but also instilled in them peace of mind and heart.

Christ later gave them a commission. A commission is an order to do something with the authority and power to actually carry it out. Christ sent the Apostles into the world the way the Father had sent him. Later this task would become even more explicit in what is termed the *Great Commission*:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. (Mt 28: 19-20)

Focus Question 1:

Were the Apostles expecting Christ to rise from the dead?

Focus Question 2:

What is one reason Christ offered his Apostles peace?

Focus Question 3:

What power did Christ give his Apostles in the Upper Room?

GUIDED EXERCISE

Work with a partner to analyze Christ's appearance to the Apostles in the Upper Room (cf. Jn 20: 19-23) to articulate exactly what Christ said and did in that encounter. Use bullet points for precision. For example:

- ✱ He appeared out of nowhere since the "doors were shut."

Focus Question 4:

What is the Great Commission?



The Disbelief of St. Thomas (detail) by Tissot.

The disciples were confused and anxious, and initially a bit frightened at the sight of Christ.

Focus Question 5:

Why did the Apostles need further instruction after the Resurrection?

Focus Question 6:

How did Christ restore Peter's leadership?

Focus Question 7:

What was the goal of the forty-day preparation Christ gave the Apostles?

FROM YouCat

What is the task of the Church?

The CHURCH's task is to make the kingdom of God, which has already begun with Jesus, germinate and grow in all nations.

Wherever Jesus went, heaven touched earth: the kingdom of God was inaugurated, a kingdom of peace and justice. The CHURCH serves this kingdom of God. She is not an end in herself. She must carry on what Jesus started. She should act as Jesus would act. She continues the sacred signs of Jesus (the SACRAMENTS). She hands on Jesus' words. That is why the Church, for all her weakness, is a formidable bit of heaven on earth. (YouCat 123)



*Christ's Charge to Peter (detail)
by Raphael.
Christ wanted Peter to exercise his
primacy in the Church.*

During one post-Resurrection appearance, Christ also gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins. Breathing on them, he said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (Jn 20:22-23). By instituting the Sacrament of Penance in this way, Christ gave his Apostles, the priests of the New Covenant, the way of conferring his grace of forgiveness upon the faithful; and a way for the faithful to confess their sins and receive that grace, the fruit of their repentance, made available by his act of Redemption.

FORTY DAYS OF INSTRUCTION

Even though Christ had taught his Apostles many things, including explicitly instructing them that he would be rejected and put to death by crucifixion, but would rise from the dead on the third day, they were still confused by what had happened. This is why Christ continued teaching the Apostles for forty days after his Resurrection, appearing to them and "speaking of the Kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

One of the matters Christ attended to was related to his Resurrection gift of peace. Peter was still dejected from having denied Christ three times, as the Lord had predicted. When he and some of the Apostles had been fishing on the Sea of Galilee all night without catching anything, Christ appeared on the shore but they did not recognize him. He told them to lower their nets and they caught a huge number of fish. Peter then recognized it was the Lord.

When they came to shore, they saw that Christ had built a charcoal fire and was roasting some fish.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." (Jn 21:15-17)

Notice Christ's charity in gently reminding Peter of his sin. At the same time, Christ purifies Peter of it through his "grief." Simultaneously, Christ assured Peter of his confidence in him to be the Good Shepherd for his flock, his Church. Christ wanted Peter to exercise his primacy in the Church and to act as his vicar or "representative."

During the forty days of post-Resurrection instruction, Christ told the Apostles:

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

Christ was drawing for them a verbal map of the ancient kingdom of David. Jerusalem was David's capital city. Judea was the tribal territory of David that surrounded Jerusalem. Samaria was the land to the north where the rest of the tribes of Israel were located. "The ends of the earth" represented all the Gentile nations that David had brought under his control. It also indicated that Christ intended the Church to fulfill God's promise to David: that his kingdom would encompass the whole world.



The Ascension by Copley. Christ ascended into Heaven before their very eyes, having completed his mission on earth.

The Apostles were being given the Great Commission of Christ—to evangelize all the peoples who were once part of the old kingdom of David, reclaiming them for the restored kingdom, which is the Church.

The Apostles and all those who assisted them were to “make disciples of all nations.” They were to baptize them in the name of the Blessed Trinity. They were also to teach them to observe all that Christ commanded (cf. Mt 28: 19-20). This teaching includes the entire Deposit of Faith found in Divine Revelation, part of which would subsequently be written down in the New Testament. It includes the observation of the entire moral law as restored and completed by Christ and which can be summarized in the New Law of Love: to love one another with a sacrificial love. It would take more than human memory to always recall and preserve without error these teachings. This is where the Holy Spirit came in.

As the forty days came to an end, Christ instructed the Apostles:

“[S]tay in the city [of Jerusalem], until you are clothed with power from on high.” Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. (Lk 24: 49-53)

Christ ascended into Heaven before their very eyes, having completed his mission on earth. According to the Book of Acts, the Apostles momentarily stood there, amazed, until an angel of God appeared and told them:

Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. (Acts 1: 11)

Christ would indeed come again to judge the world at the end of time. Until then, the Apostles had work to do: Leading the Church that Christ had founded, and taking his message to the ends of the earth.

Focus Question 8:

Is the moral law part of the teachings of the Apostles?

Focus Question 9:

Did the Apostles use the New Testament in their teaching?

VOCABULARY

GREAT COMMISSION

Name given to Christ’s commission to the Apostles to teach, baptize, and make disciples of all nations.

FROM YouCat

Why do we hand on the faith?

We hand on the faith because Jesus commands us: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28: 19).

No genuine Christian leaves the transmission of the faith exclusively to specialists (teachers, pastors, missionaries). We are Christ for others. This means that every genuine Christian would like God to come to other people, too. He says to himself, “The Lord needs me! I have been baptized and confirmed and am responsible for helping the people around me to learn about God and ‘to come to the knowledge of the truth’” (1 Tim 2: 4b).

Mother Teresa used a good comparison: “Often you can see power lines running alongside the street. Unless current is flowing through them, there is no light. The power line is you and I! The current is God! We have the power to allow the current to flow through us and thus to generate the light of the world—JESUS—or to refuse to be used and, thus, allow the darkness to spread.” (YouCat 11)

Focus Question 10:

What is the Ascension?

Focus Question 11:

Why did Christ create twelve Apostles?

Focus Question 12:

Who was responsible for the replacement of Judas?

Focus Question 13:

What was St. Peter's criterion for selecting a new Apostle?

VOCABULARY**APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION**

The process by which the leadership of the Church has been passed down in a direct line from the original Twelve Apostles through the bishops of the Church.

Focus Question 14:

How was the selection of St. Matthias the beginning of Apostolic Succession?

Focus Question 15:

Why were there so many foreign-language-speaking Jews in Jerusalem fifty days after Passover?

Focus Question 16:

What did Pentecost traditionally commemorate?

Focus Question 17:

What two similes did Luke use to describe the descent of the Holy Spirit?

Focus Question 18:

What immediate power did the Holy Spirit give the disciples of Christ?

"Charismatic gifts" are gifts of the Holy Spirit to build up the Church.

CREATING AN APOSTLE

Before they could do so, however, the Apostles had to wait until they were "clothed with power from on high," as Christ had promised.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Twelve Apostles represented the Twelve Tribes of Israel, and they were to preside over the restored People of God in his kingdom, the Church. Yet, by the time of the Resurrection, they numbered only eleven: Judas, one of the original Apostles, had betrayed Christ and had taken his own life in despair (cf. Mt 27: 3-5).

To restore their number to twelve, St. Peter, as head of the Church, took the initiative to replace Judas. He laid down these criteria for selecting this new Apostle as he called for an election for a replacement:

So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection. (Acts 1: 21-22)

A disciple named Matthias, who had been with Christ from the beginning, was selected to take Judas's place among the Twelve. Just as the Apostles now "enrolled" a new Apostle (cf. Acts 1: 26), they would later appoint many more bishops to act in their places so that Christ's commission would continue to be carried out after their deaths. This was the beginning of *Apostolic Succession*, as bishops handed on to other bishops the authority that originated with Christ and the Apostles.

With their number now complete, the Apostles continued in prayer.

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Ten days after Christ's Ascension into Heaven, the Apostles were again gathered together with Mary and other disciples in the Upper Room, about a hundred and twenty souls in all.

At the time, Jerusalem was filled with faithful Jews from all over the world who had come to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. This feast was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Passover (the word *Pentecost* is taken from the Greek word for "fifty"). It commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Apostles were there in the Upper Room when something extraordinary happened:

[S]uddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2: 1-4)

The transformation of the Apostles was immediate. They became like new men. They spoke out boldly, proclaiming the Gospel to all who would listen, unafraid of the consequences of bearing such bold witness. This ability is a gift of the Holy Spirit, as the *Catechism* points out:

So that she can fulfill her mission, the Holy Spirit "bestows upon [the Church] varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs her."¹ "Henceforward the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing



Pentecost by Van Der Werff.

The day of Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church's public ministry in the world.

among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom.”² (CCC 768)

“Hierarchic gifts” have to do with the exercise of leadership in the Church. For example, the Apostles were the shepherds of the Christian faithful and Peter was the leader of the Apostles. Later the Apostles would appoint deacons to assist them, and later bishops. “Charismatic gifts” are gifts of the Holy Spirit to build up the Church. We see one of them right away when those to whom the disciples preach to can hear them in their own languages.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?” (Acts 2:5-8)

St. Peter stood up and began to address the crowd, proclaiming to them that the long-awaited Messiah had come. It was Christ, crucified and resurrected from the dead, who now sits at the right hand of God the Father in Heaven. Upon hearing this, the people asked St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles what they must do to be saved. St. Peter responded by urging them to repent and to be baptized.

The day of Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church's public ministry in the world. The Apostles took up Christ's commission to be his witnesses and to baptize men and women from every nation. On the day of Pentecost alone, 3,000 people were baptized and became Christians. But this was only the beginning of the mission. From Jerusalem, the Gospel message would go out to all the nations, to Jews and Gentiles alike. Filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church on earth would continue to grow in numbers and in fervor.

Focus Question 19:

What was the immediate effect of Pentecost on the Church?

FROM YouCat

What happened on Pentecost?

Fifty days after his Resurrection, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven upon his disciples. The age of the CHURCH began.

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit transformed fearful apostles into courageous witnesses to Christ. In a very short time, thousands had themselves baptized: it was the birthday of the Church. The miracle of the languages on PENTECOST shows that the Church is there for all peoples from the very beginning: She is universal (the Latin term for the Greek *kat' holon*, catholic) and missionary. She speaks to all men, overcomes ethnic and linguistic barriers, and can be understood by all. To this day the Holy Spirit is the “soul” of the Church, the essential principle of her life. (YouCat 118)



St. Peter Preaching by Masolino.

“And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38)

GUIDED EXERCISE

Perform a “paragraph shrink” on CCC 767 to see its essential content.

In a paragraph shrink, you read the selection, identify the main idea and the two to four subordinate ideas or supporting details, and then rewrite the selection in one or two sentences.

VOCABULARY

CHARISM

A special grace or gift of the Holy Spirit to be used to help build up the Church.

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Supernatural works that a person is enabled to perform with the assistance of the Holy Spirit: charity, generosity, joy, gentleness, peace, faithfulness, patience, modesty, kindness, self-control, goodness, and chastity.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Seven supernatural traits that render us attentive to the will of God: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Focus Question 20:

Name and describe six ways in which the Holy Spirit is active in the Church today.

GUIDED EXERCISE

Free write for a few minutes on the ways the Holy Spirit continues to work within the Church, by answering the following question:

- ✱ Which of these six ways do you think is the most important for the life of the Church and why?

It was the Holy Spirit who empowered the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the multitudes.

THE MEANING OF THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before his Ascension, Christ had promised his Apostles that he would be with them always, and at Pentecost, he fulfilled his promise. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, Christ gave life to the Church and united it to himself. It was the Holy Spirit who empowered the Apostles to preach the Gospel to the multitudes. It was the Holy Spirit who opened the hearts of those who heard the Good News, and it was the Holy Spirit who revealed the Church as Christ's instrument of salvation for the entire world.

“When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church.”³ Then “the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through preaching, was begun.”⁴ As the “convocation” of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them.⁵ (CCC 767)

As we will explore in later chapters, the Holy Spirit is like the “soul” of the Mystical Body of Christ, giving life to the Church and guiding its actions. The Holy Spirit continues to work within the Church in many different ways.

- ✱ **Through the Pope and the bishops.** The Holy Spirit assists the Pope and the bishops, the successors of the Apostles, in their role of governing, sanctifying, and proclaiming the Gospel in the Church.
- ✱ **In Sacred Scripture.** The Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of the Bible. Even though the Bible is made up of books written by different authors, the ultimate author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit. This is why we say that the Bible is inspired and without error. The Holy Spirit also guides the Church in infallibly interpreting the words of Sacred Scripture.
- ✱ **In the Sacraments.** The Holy Spirit gives life to new members of the Church through Baptism, incorporating them into the Mystical Body of Christ. In each of the Seven Sacraments, the Holy Spirit works to give growth and healing to all the members of the Church.
- ✱ **In the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.** These seven supernatural gifts render us attentive to the will of God and to the actual graces that he sends us to follow his will. Recall that the gifts of the Spirit are wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord.
- ✱ **In the Fruits of the Holy Spirit.** These are the supernatural works that a person is enabled to perform with the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The twelve fruits of the Spirit are charity, generosity, joy, gentleness, peace, faithfulness, patience, modesty, kindness, self-control, goodness, and chastity.
- ✱ **Through special graces.** The Holy Spirit also gives the faithful special graces, called *charisms*, so that they are able to contribute to the task of building up the Church. For example, one person may be given the *charism* of teaching the Faith so that others can easily understand it.

ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

Through the work of the Apostles and disciples, the Gospel of Christ spread to many new believers in those first days of the Church. Nevertheless, there was significant opposition. The Jewish authorities had assumed that Christ's Death would scatter his followers and silence his message. After the events of Pentecost, however, it became clear that this was not the case. The Christian community was growing by the day. Even after they were imprisoned by the authorities and beaten, the Apostles refused to stop preaching about Jesus Christ.

A man named Stephen, a Christian convert and a deacon in the Church, was taken before the Jewish authorities and accused of blasphemy. Just as at the trial of Christ, false witnesses were



St. Peter Consecrates Stephen as Deacon by Fra Angelico.

brought forward to testify against him. St. Stephen did not hold his tongue. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he began to preach, explaining how the Scriptures showed Christ to be the promised Messiah. He added that just as his accusers' ancestors had opposed the Holy Spirit by persecuting the prophets, they themselves had betrayed and murdered Christ (cf. Acts 7: 51-52). Stephen's audience became enraged, and they took him out of the city and stoned him to death.

St. Stephen was the Church's first martyr, meaning witness: that is, put to death for witnessing his faith in Jesus Christ.

The martyrdom of St. Stephen marked the beginning of a tremendous persecution of the Church in Jerusalem. Many of the Christians fled to the surrounding regions, where they continued to spread the Gospel. Those who did not leave were imprisoned. The persecution by the Jewish leaders was only the first of many similar persecutions during the first several centuries of Christianity.

Of all the saints honored and celebrated by the Church, martyrs hold a special place. Martyrs are the ultimate witnesses to the truth of the Faith, "bearing witness even unto death." All Christians are called to live in imitation of Christ. Those who are given the grace of martyrdom imitate Christ in the fullest way possible, by dying like Christ died, out of love: "Greater love hath no man than this" (Jn 15: 13).

St. Stephen's feast day is December 26.

Focus Question 21:

What enraged the Jewish authorities about Stephen's preaching?

Focus Question 22:

What is a martyr?

FROM YouCat

Martyr (from Greek *martyria* = witness, testimony):

A Christian martyr is a person who is ready to suffer violence or even to be killed for Christ, who is the truth, or for a conscientious decision made on the basis of faith.

The deacon Stephen was the first Christian martyr. On account of his commitment to the truth of the Gospel, he was stoned to death outside the gates of the city of Jerusalem between AD 36 and 40. (p. 248)



Stoning of St. Stephen by Rembrandt.
The martyrdom of St. Stephen marked the beginning of a tremendous persecution of the Church in Jerusalem.

CLOSURE

Summarize in one paragraph the activity of the Church from the Resurrection through Pentecost.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Have a class discussion on *teenagers as missionaries* using the following questions:

- ✱ What would it mean for teenagers to be missionary-minded?
- ✱ Why are teens generally not missionary-minded?
- ✱ If teens were to be so, who would most reasonably be the objects of their missionary activities?
- ✱ What would be required for teens to be enthusiastic missionaries?



Appearance on the Mountain in Galilee by Duccio.
 "And lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Mt 28:20)

CONCLUSION

Throughout the Old Testament, we see God forming his people into an assembly; throughout the life and ministry of Christ, we see him forming the faithful into a Church to continue his work of redemption. From the earliest days after the Ascension, we see the Church in action, spreading the Gospel and carrying out Christ's work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the next chapter, we will study the history of the Church as the first Apostles and evangelists took the Gospel message far and wide and won countless converts even in the face of hardships and persecutions.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What power did Christ give his Apostles in the Upper Room?
2. What is the Great Commission?
3. Why did the Apostles need further instruction after the Resurrection?
4. What is the Ascension?
5. What was St. Peter's criterion for selecting a new Apostle?
6. What immediate power did the Holy Spirit give the disciples of Christ?
7. Name and describe six ways in which the Holy Spirit is active in the Church today.
8. What enraged the Jewish authorities about Stephen's preaching?

ENDNOTES – CHAPTER 4

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. LG 4. | 4. AG 4. |
| 2. LG 5. | 5. Cf. Mt 28:19-20; AG 2, |
| 3. LG 4; cf. Jn 17:4. | 5-6. |

From the earliest days after the Ascension, we see the Church in action, spreading the Gospel and carrying out Christ's work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.