

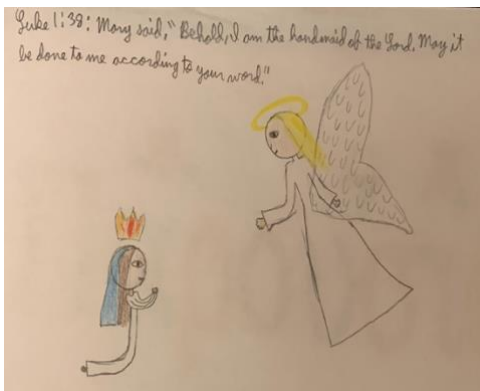


Parent Pages

Preparing the environment of the Domestic Church*

* The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. Though recovered only recently, the term dates back to the first century AD. The Greek word *ecclesiola* referred to "little church." The early Church understood that the home was fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness.

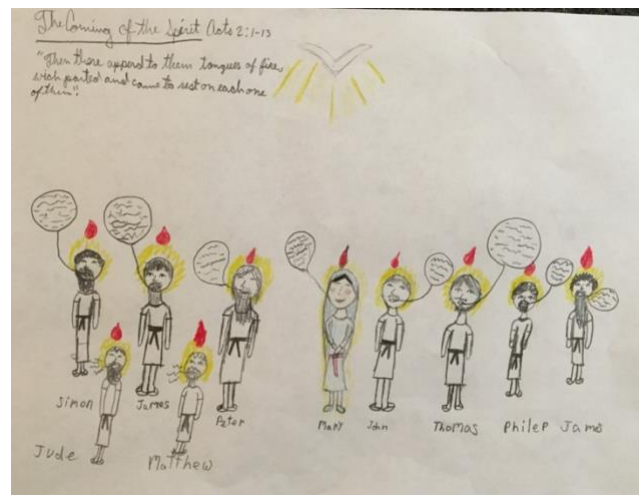
The Holy Spirit and the Elementary Child



The celebration of Pentecost traditionally marks the end of the Atrium year. It is so appropriate to head into summer having asked the Holy Spirit to stir up His gifts within us and to pray in a special way for the gift we feel will most help us to live well in the Kingdom of God. Since the age of three, the children in the Atrium have encountered the Holy Spirit as an active agent in the Bible (the Annunciation), in the liturgy (the Epiclesis), and in their own lives (Baptism). The elementary children, with their expanded sense of time and history, enjoy pondering the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout all of Salvation History.

The Holy Spirit in History:

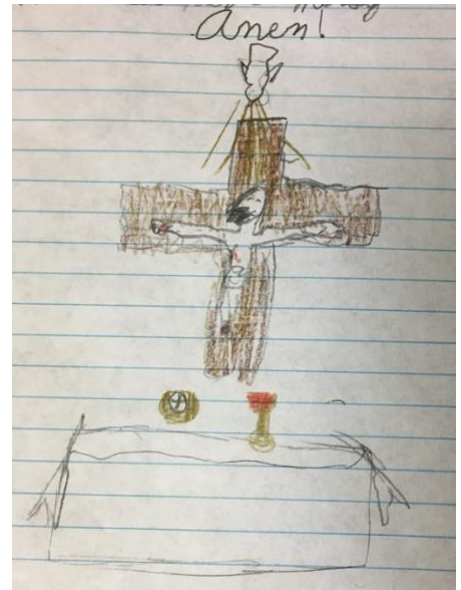
From the very beginning of Genesis, we hear about "a mighty wind" that is hovering over the waters of creation. Through the assistance of the Spirit of the Lord, the prophets are able to proclaim God's Word to the people. The Infancy Narratives in Luke (the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Presentation in the Temple) speak of the Holy Spirit bringing life, joy, and knowledge. At the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River, the Spirit descends in the form of a dove. Then, during the Last Supper Jesus speaks to the Apostles of the Advocate who "will teach you everything." After Jesus ascends into heaven, in Acts 2:1-4+ we hear of the great moment in which the Holy Spirit enters the world in a new way, accompanied by the signs of "a noise like a strong driving wind" and "tongues as of fire," filling the entire place where the Apostles are gathered. "And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim." From this moment, the Apostles, and those who came after them, began to bring Jesus to the whole world through the retelling of His life, death, and resurrection and by bringing Jesus to them in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist, all through the great power of the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit Today:

This great gift of the Holy Spirit did not end with the Apostles. Today, through Baptism, we have each received the Holy Spirit and all of His gifts: Knowledge, Understanding, Wisdom, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety, and Fear of the Lord. Each year at Pentecost we celebrate as a whole Church community both His coming in history and His presence with us today as the Holy Spirit enables Jesus to be with us through the action of each individual sacrament and especially through the Eucharist. In pondering this great gift of the Holy Spirit, perhaps you would want to...

- Read Isaiah 11:2-3a. Make a list of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned and ponder with your family what these gifts might be as well as where you see them being used in history and today.
- Consider that we celebrate Pentecost as the “Birthday of the Church.” Why might we give it that name?
- Ponder one way in which you have experienced the Holy Spirit in your life today. How did He help you today in using His Gifts which you received at your Baptism?



The Holy Spirit in the Future:

How might you celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost with your family this year? Perhaps you would like to join those across the world who pray a novena in preparation for this great feast. The first novena ever recorded was the one made by Mary and the Apostles before the first Pentecost. Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem and they did so, spending this time in prayer with one another. The novena to the Holy Spirit begins on the Friday of the 6th Week of Easter and is prayed each day until Pentecost. There is a formal novena which can be prayed, or you and your family could voice your own prayer to the Holy Spirit as you await His great feast. May the Gifts of the Holy Spirit be stirred up within you so that you might face whatever may come with hope and with peace, trusting always in the One who has overcome the world (Jn 16:33) as we, together, await the day when we shall see only peace and “the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the LORD, as water covers the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

