

We have seen the true Light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith; we adore the indivisible Trinity, who has saved us' (Byzantine Liturgy).

Are birthdays important to you? Do you enjoy the celebration, the fun, the joy and the occasion? I hope so - we should enjoy our own birthday and other people's. There is one birthday which we are all invited to celebrate and enjoy - the Church's birthday. Today, we celebrate the day on which the Church was born, the day the Holy Spirit came down in power, authority and glory. On that day timid men became warriors, women became saints, and the people of God were ignited by the love of God burning in their hearts and the power of the gospel on their lips.

A birthday celebration is an opportunity to remember a moment in history when a unique and irreplaceable person was born. On the Church's birthday we have an opportunity to remember not merely a past event but also the living truth that the same grace, the same anointing and gift of the Holy Spirit, is made available to us still today, mediated through the sacramental life of the Church. For

the Church, Pentecost is no nostalgic event: the gift and blessing of the Spirit is poured out on us anew. The Church and the world have need of a second Pentecost, a priestly Pentecost, an interior Pentecost. With the coming of the Spirit a new era was ushered in, a new dispensation began, and life for humankind would never be the same again. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, the Paraclete, the Counsellor, is given to us in a new, exciting and dynamic way today. The Spirit is one with and equal to the Father and Son. All power and dominion belongs to the Spirit and as the Lord and Giver of Life we worship and adore him. We humbly kneel before the Lord of Life and ask for a fresh outpouring, a new wave and a mighty anointing of God's Spirit on the Church and on men and women of good will.

'Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the kingdom of heaven and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory.' (St Basil)

*Acts 2:1-11 • Psalm 103(104):1, 24, 29-31, 34
1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13 • John 20:19-23*