

Whit Sunday

While it may not be as widely known, or celebrated as Christmas and Easter, **Whit Sunday or Pentecost Sunday** is one of the most significant Holy Days of the Christian calendar.

This festival commemorates **the coming of the “COMFORTER”** (Greek word “Parakletos”) to the believers of Jesus Christ; following the Ascension of our Lord Jesus into Heaven and being seated on God’s Right Hand.

It is recorded in St John’s Gospel 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ANOTHER COMFORTER, that he may abide with you for ever;” and in the same chapter verse 26 states “But the Comforter, *which is* the HOLY GHOST, WHOM THE FATHER WILL SEND in my name, he shall teach you all things, and BRING ALL THINGS TO YOUR REMEMBRANCE, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Furthermore, in St. John’s Gospel 16:13-14 it is recorded “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: FOR HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF; BUT WHATSOEVER HE SHALL HEAR, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: FOR HE SHALL RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHEW *IT* UNTO YOU.”

The Biblical account describes how the eleven Apostles, who were gathered to celebrate the Jewish Festival of Shavuot (commemoration of the receiving of the Ten Commandments), began to talk in foreign languages; languages that were the mother tongues of many nations, leading the massed onlookers to assume that they were drunk.

However, Saint Peter explained that the Apostles were inspired by the “Holy Ghost” (Greek word “Agio Pnevma”) and then preached the first Christian Sermon; which was heard by the assembled - each one in their own mother tongue. This is recorded in Acts chapter 2:7-8 “And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans? And HOW HEAR WE EVERY MAN IN OUR OWN TONGUE, WHEREIN WE WERE BORN?”

This prompted the Conversion and Baptism of 3,000 people.

With regard to the HOLY SPIRIT, St. Peter is attributed as saying “And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL FLESH: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:” Acts 2:7

This first Whit Sunday marked the beginning of the Christian Church as an official and meaningful religious movement. The celebration of Whit Sunday is widely considered as the celebration of the Birthday of Christianity.

The name ‘Pentecost’ is derived from the Greek word ‘Pentekostos’, meaning ‘50’.

Whit Sunday is celebrated on the Seventh Sunday after Easter, marking 50 days since the final Sabbath of Passover, and so falls on a different date each year.

While the term 'Pentecost' is more widely used across many Christian denominations, traditionally the Anglican Church has referred to this celebration as 'Whit Sunday' or 'Whitsun'.

The reason is simple, in those days on Pentecost Sunday, the adults wanting to join the church, were Baptised on that day and these participants would be dressed all in white.

'Whit Sunday' is also derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "**WIT**", meaning '**UNDERSTANDING**' and therefore it celebrates the followers of Jesus being filled with the **WISDOM OF THE HOLY GHOST**.

Within Christianity this day is still popular for adult Baptisms.

Some Anglican churches still hold "Whit Walks"; which is very similar to the Palm Sunday Procession around the Church edifice. Men and women who are to be Baptised lead the procession with just the Crucifer and Candle Bearers ahead of them.

God Bless you

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