



Pope Francis accepts the offertory gifts during Pentecost Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 19, 2023. (CNS/Vatican Media)



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Empowered and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Christians are called to develop the gentleness needed to proclaim the Gospel to all, Pope Francis said.

Just as the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples, transformed their hearts and instilled in them a "serene courage" to share their experience of Jesus, the pope said that today's Catholics who received the gift of the Spirit in baptism and confirmation are called to develop a similar missionary impulse.

"From the 'upper room' of this basilica, like the apostles, we too are being sent forth to proclaim the Gospel to all," Francis said in his homily for Pentecost Mass in St. Peter's Basilica May 19. "We are sent into the world not only geographically, but also beyond the frontiers of race and religion for a truly universal mission."

Yet, he said, Christians are called to evangelize through the "power and gentleness" of the Spirit, "not with arrogance and imposition."

"Christians are not overbearing," he said; "their strength is another: the strength of the Spirit."

While Francis presided over the Mass, Cardinal Arthur Roche, prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, was the main celebrant at the altar, which currently is surrounded by scaffolding due to restoration work on the canopy that stands over it.

Vested in red, the pope said that Christians must tirelessly share the Gospel as the apostles did, not "with calculation and cunning, but with the energy born of fidelity to the truth that the Spirit teaches us in our hearts and causes to grow within us."

In that way, he continued, "we surrender to the Spirit, not to the forces of the world."

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Francis said that emboldened by the Holy Spirit, Christians should not be "intimidated by hardship, derision or opposition," but proclaim peace, solidarity, life and fidelity to those who act in discordance with the Gospel.

"At the same time, our proclamation seeks to be gentle (and) welcoming to everyone," he said. "Let us not forget this: everyone, everyone, everyone."

The pope then encouraged Christians to recall Jesus' parable of the great banquet, in which a king asks his servants to invite anyone they can find, "good and bad," to a dinner banquet.

"May the Spirit give us the strength to go forth and call to everyone with that gentleness," the pope prayed. And "that it gives us the gentleness to welcome all."

After Mass, Francis prayed the "Regina Coeli" with visitors wearing rain ponchos and holding umbrellas in a drizzly St. Peter's Square.

"The Holy Spirit is that which creates harmony," the pope told visitors after the prayer. "He creates it from different, sometimes conflicting realities."

Francis prayed that the Holy Spirit would increase the "communion and fraternity of Christians from different confessions" and that the Spirit would give the leaders of governments "the courage to make acts of dialogue that lead to putting an end to war."

The pope lamented the many wars taking place in the world and prayed particularly for the Ukrainian region of Kharkiv, which has been the site of a renewed Russian assault in recent days, as well as for Palestine and Israel.

Francis prayed "that the Holy Spirit may bring the leaders of nations and all of us to open the doors toward peace."

"Today, on the feast of Pentecost, let us pray to the Holy Spirit, love of the Father and the Son, that it may create harmony in hearts, harmony in families, harmony in society, harmony in the whole world," he said.