

Sunday, May 24 , 2026 Pentecost Sunday Sermon  
“Another Advocate: The Spirit of Truth” Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Acts 2:1–13, John 14:15–21

## ❶ [Two Pentecosts, Two Helpers]

Today is Pentecost. In Greek, it is called “Pentecoste,” which means “the fiftieth day.” It is a day to celebrate the Holy Spirit, as promised, descending upon the apostles on the fiftieth day after Jesus’ resurrection, empowering them to go out and preach the gospel to the world.

“While they were all together in one place, suddenly a sound came from heaven like a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.” (Acts 2:1–2) It says “a violent wind.” The word for “wind” is “pneuma” in Greek and “ruach” in Hebrew, which can also be translated as “breath” or “spirit.” Therefore, this violent wind is “the breath of God.” This breath of God was breathed upon humanity on two occasions. When the first Adam was created by God, God breathed into his nostrils the “breath of life” (Genesis 1:7)—that is, the breath of God—and he became a living being. However, after he sinned and turned away from God, the breath of God departed, and he died. Therefore, the coming of the Holy Spirit is the creation of a new humanity.

The first descent of the Holy Spirit was performed by Christ Himself when He appeared on the night of the Resurrection. The Lord breathed on His disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22). We can see that Christ’s breath is the Holy Spirit. The disciples who received Christ’s breath were recreated as new beings, as the body of Christ. From that day on, the disciples began to breathe God’s breath.

The second coming of the Holy Spirit took place 50 days later, by the Holy Spirit’s own will. That is today. As it is written: “Tongues of fire appeared and rested on each of them. Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:3–4). The Holy Spirit appears in different forms at different times. When Jesus was baptized, He appeared in the form of a “dove,” but He appeared in the form of “tongues of fire” upon the apostles (the church community). The form of the dove was meant to recall the Flood of Noah and to reveal that Jesus is the true ark that saves people. The form of tongues of fire was meant to recall God’s fiery words on Mount Sinai and to enable God’s word to be proclaimed throughout the world. The Holy Spirit distributes various gifts to each person as He wills. The Holy Spirit gave the disciples the power to speak and the power to preach. They began to speak of God’s great works in foreign languages. Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth” (John 14:16–17). Jesus referred to “another Advocate.” The first Advocate (Helper) is Jesus, and the second Advocate (Helper) is the Holy Spirit. We are saved by these two Helpers, Christ

and the Holy Spirit. Since God the Father created the world through these two, it is also these two who are sent to save the world. Yet they are one.

## ② **[The Holy Spirit comes upon those who seek Him]**

These two outpourings of the Holy Spirit were prophesied in the Old Testament book of Joel: “The Lord will send you the autumn rain in abundance to save you; he will send you the autumn and spring rains as before” (Joel 2:23). The spring rain brings forth new growth, and the autumn rain brings in the harvest. Even among Christians, there are those whose faith has sprouted but who lack strength. Such people have not yet received the autumn rain—that is, the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they must pray earnestly for power from above. We do not know when it will be given, but we have no choice but to wait. However, this is not a passive waiting. We wait while praying, just as the disciples did. Prayer is the act of preparing ourselves to receive. Well-tilled soil yields a hundredfold harvest, but hard soil cannot bear fruit. Even if the Holy Spirit comes, He cannot enter. As the Lord said, “The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him” (John 14:17), the Holy Spirit comes only to those who seek him, who desire to know him, and who seek to see him. Without receiving God’s power, we cannot do missionary work, build churches, or accomplish anything. We may be able to do human works, but we cannot do God’s works.

## ③ **[The Mystery of the Holy Spirit's Work]**

Irenaeus of Lyon, in the second century, said, “God created all things through His two arms, namely, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit existed before the world began, and at the time of creation, He covered the whole earth and participated in the act of creation. Every aspect of Jesus’ life was filled with the Holy Spirit. His preaching, healing of the sick, casting out of demons, and miracles were all accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus’ resurrection was also the work of the Holy Spirit. In Orthodox prayer, the service begins with the “Invocation of the Holy Spirit.” This is a distinctive feature of the Eastern Church, not found in the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, or Protestant churches.

● “King of Heaven, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, who is present throughout the earth and fills all things, treasury of blessings, Giver of life, come and dwell within us, and cleanse us from all impurity. O Gracious One, save our souls.”

This prayer acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is everywhere and fills every place. It seems I had misunderstood who the Holy Spirit is. The Holy Spirit did not appear at Pentecost, nor did He begin His work at that time. Because humans have driven God out of this world, we have come to believe that the natural world operates on its own, but this is not the case. The Holy Spirit, who created all things,

is at work in the natural world even today, permeating it, giving it life, and moving it. “You send forth Your Spirit, and they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.” (Psalm 103:30) The Holy Spirit truly works. There is never a time when He is not at work.

#### ④ **【Though unseen, it bears the fruit of Christ】**

The Holy Spirit is characterized by “anonymity and transparency.” Because He is so humble, He does not assert Himself; instead, He bestows grace and then withdraws Himself. The Holy Spirit does not teach about Himself, but about Christ (the Truth). To know the Holy Spirit, one must look at those who have received Him. As Jesus told Nicodemus, the wind blows wherever it pleases. We may hear the sound, but we do not know where it comes from or where it goes. However, a transformation will surely take place in those who have received the wind that is the Holy Spirit. It is just as rain falling from heaven permeates the plants, vanishing without a trace to bear fruit. In the same way, when the Holy Spirit descends upon us, He vanishes without a trace, causing us to bear fruit in the likeness of Christ. In this way, the Holy Spirit works even today to make us like Christ and to strengthen our faith.

● In the 19th century, there was a saint named Seraphim of Sarov. After he healed a patient whom a doctor named Motovilov had given up on, Seraphim and Motovilov became friends. Motovilov often visited Seraphim’s home and took notes on what he said. “The true purpose of a Christian’s life lies in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. ... God the Word, our Lord, the God-man Jesus Christ, likens our entire life to a marketplace. He tells everyone, ‘Do business until I come and save the age, for the days are evil.’ In other words, use your time to acquire heavenly goods by using earthly things as a means.” When Motovilov asked, “How can we know if we have received the grace of the Holy Spirit?” Seraphim replied, “We are both in the Holy Spirit right now. “Why don’t you look at my face?” Seraphim asked. Motovilov replied, “Your face shines brighter than the sun; my eyes cannot bear it.” When Seraphim asked, “How do you feel now?” he “I feel better than ever. I feel a wonderful stillness and peace within me. My heart is overflowing with joy. I feel warmth.” Seraphim said, “When the Spirit of God descends upon a person and its overflowing power envelops him, the person’s soul will be filled with indescribable joy. For the Spirit of God transforms everything it touches into joy.”

The sign of receiving the Holy Spirit is the birth of “joy, peace, and warmth” within the heart. This is the Kingdom of God.

Finally, Jesus said, “The Father will send another Advocate to be with you forever.” The Holy Spirit will be with us forever. “Forever” means beyond this world. The Holy Spirit has been practicing dwelling within me in this world. In the next life, my body will be transformed into an immortal body so that I may dwell there

forever. Even when human breath ceases, God's breath does not end. It breathes within me forever. That is why we will be revived and resurrected. St. Paul speaks of this, saying, "He who dwells in you will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit." (Romans 8:11). Thus, even after I die, God's work of salvation continues, and He will surely bring us to perfection. I think you can see how important it is to receive the Holy Spirit. Let us take the time to continue praying to receive the Holy Spirit.