

## Peter at Pentecost

Acts 1:12-26; 2:14-42

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### WHAT WE FOUND

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In the gap between Ascension and Pentecost, someone had to move first, and it was Peter: "Peter stood up among the brethren" (Acts 1:15), interpreting Scripture and directing the Church's first corporate act, with authority and with the body, never over it. The business was a vacancy, and Scripture's own word for what Judas held is *episkopē*, office of oversight: "His office let another take" (Acts 1:20, quoting Psalm 109:8). The first agenda item of the Church was apostolic succession: Matthias enrolled, the Twelve complete. The eyewitness role died with the apostles; the office did not (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

At Pentecost the staging is the doctrine: "Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice" (2:14), one voice, the college with him. The crowd, cut to the heart, asked "Peter and the rest of the apostles" what to do, and Peter answered for all: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you" (2:38). Three thousand entered: the keys of Matthew 16 turning in public, opening the kingdom to Israel.

Fifty days separate the courtyard fire from this Pentecost proclamation. What changed was not Peter's temperament but Pentecost: turned again, he strengthens (Luke 22:32, visibly fulfilled). And the newborn Church settled into four devotions that have never adjourned: "the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (2:42), doctrine, communion, Eucharist, liturgy: your parish, week one.

### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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**St. John Chrysostom** *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles, Homily 3*

Chrysostom watches Peter rise in the upper room and names what he sees: Peter acts with authority in the matter, as the one to whom Christ entrusted the flock, always first to begin, the mouth of the rest. Yet Chrysostom equally admires the manner: he does everything with the common consent, nothing by imperious command, primacy exercised as service among brothers.

#### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Irenaeus of Lyons** *Against Heresies, Book III (chs. 1-4 and 12)*

Irenaeus leans on the Pentecost preaching as bedrock: Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed to Israel the crucified and risen Jesus as Lord and Christ, and this public apostolic preaching, delivered before thousands and handed down in the Church, is the standard against which every later novelty is measured. What Peter preached openly at the beginning, the Church guards to the end.

#### VOICES OF THE CHURCH

**St. Bede the Venerable** *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*

Bede lingers on the election of Matthias: the office forsaken by the traitor is not abolished but filled, that the mystical number of the twelve, foundation stones of the new Israel, might stand complete. For Bede the lesson is durable: the ministry entrusted to the apostles is greater than the men who fail it, and the Lord provides for his Church's continuance.

## LIVE IT THIS WEEK

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### 1.

Read the whole Pentecost sermon, Acts 2:14-41, out loud once this week, standing up. Notice what it feels like in the body to proclaim rather than just read.

### 2.

Live Acts 2:42 deliberately for seven days: one act of study (the teaching), one act of fellowship, one Mass beyond Sunday if you can (the breaking of bread), and one fixed time of daily prayer.

### 3.

Keep the daily Our Father for the pope, adding this week: "Lord, as you filled Peter at Pentecost, fill his successor with boldness and your Church with three thousand more."

## MEMORY VERSE

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*"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."* (Acts 2:42, RSV2CE)

## BEFORE NEXT SESSION

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Read **Acts 10** in full (it is a story, it reads fast), then **Acts 15:1-29**. In chapter 10, count how many times God has to repeat himself to Peter; in chapter 15, mark exactly who speaks, in what order, and what happens to the room after Peter finishes.

**Catechism Connection:** CCC 731-732; 857; 861