



“You shall receive
power when the
Holy Spirit has
come upon you...”

Acts 1:8

Reflection:

May 2026

Imagine the hope and tenderness with which Jesus uttered these words to His sincere but worldly-minded disciples: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” He was not urging them to strive harder or summon strength through sheer willpower; rather, He invited them to trust His promise - to receive the most precious gift He had to offer.

Much of our Christian life is spent trying to manage ourselves - our weaknesses, our habits, our inconsistencies. We resolve, we falter, and we begin anew. Unwittingly, we come to lean on self-effort more than on His word. Yet Jesus calls us to receive before we respond.

We first tasted this power at Baptism - our “personal Easter” - when we were delivered from the dominion of darkness and transferred into a kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. This power of the Holy Spirit unfolds as gently as the “scent of water” (Job 14:7 - 9), stirring a felled tree to sprout anew. Even in stagnation or spiritual aridity, the slightest yielding unveils fresh horizons.

He is a generous, inexhaustible reality who refuses to limit His possibilities in us until we reach our Father’s home. This Power has a Name and is a Person: the Holy Spirit. The work of the Son and the Spirit is perfectly entwined. While Jesus stands before the Father as our Advocate, His blood pleading for us, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, works within us.

He comes upon us not imposing but renewing. He stands as our defender, shielding us from the enemy’s traps and turning our “hearts of stone” into “hearts of flesh” (Ezek. 36:26 - 27). This indwelling is life-giving water that cleanses past wounds and heals the heavy sadness of sin we so often carry.

But what does this power look like in practice? Here is a metaphor that reveals the “power” of Acts 1:8 in its most beautiful form. In *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis depicts a man journeying towards the mountains of Heaven with a red lizard on his shoulder that incessantly whispers to him - a symbol of the shameful sins and disordered lusts we often “tolerate” because we fear the pain of letting them go. This lizard is no giant monster, but a cold, nagging, parasitic presence that whispers excuses in our ears, convincing us that we can “manage” our weaknesses on our own.

When an angel offers to slay it, the man hesitates, terrified that he cannot survive without it. Yet the moment he finally surrenders and allows the angel to strike, a miracle unfolds: the lizard does not simply vanish into nothingness. Instead, the very energy that fuelled a shameful habit is resurrected and redeemed into the noble strength of a magnificent silver-white stallion. The man, now vibrant and solid, leaps onto the horse, and the very passion that once held him back now propels him at a gallop towards the heart of God.

The Holy Spirit does not come to leave us empty or diminished; He comes to reorder our disordered lives. He takes our “lizards” - misdirected intensities, wounds, and stubborn patterns - and converts that raw energy into powerful “stallions” of holy zeal and Kingdom charisms. A joyless or stagnant spiritual life often stems from not giving the Spirit a “free hand” to perform this transformation.

As we obey the promptings of the Spirit more than the impulses of the flesh, our character is transformed. We come to believe that holiness is possible, for we are clothed with power from on high - a power far greater than the sins and wounds that once gripped us.

This is the true life of Jesus Youth: a life nourished by the presence and power of the Spirit, empowering us to be His witnesses wherever we are. This Pentecost season beckons us to believe in His plans for us. He longs to clothe us with His power - to confront our challenges and make us witnesses of joy.

This Pentecost, trust His designs for you. He yearns to mantle you in power, turning trials to testimony, dryness to joyful witness.

Will you say a deeper “Yes” to His power and His ways today?

Dr. Fr. Vinoy Thomas Paikkattu, O.P.

Fr. Vinoy is the chaplain of the Jesus Youth National Mission Team and the Goa Regional Team. He currently serves as a professor at the Dominican Institute of Philosophy, Goa, India.