

The number seven occurs in Scripture in many ways.

In creation, there are six days of creation, and on the seventh day, God rested.

In the Book of Revelation, the vision of the heavenly liturgy is filled with sevens ... seven candles, seven churches ... seven seals, seven trumpets ... seven angels, seven thunders ... seven, seven, seven.

The number seven occurs nearly 900 times in Scripture ... over and over again.

It signifies perfection ... as in the Creation, God said that everything was “*very good*” ... it also signifies completion.

We are told to forgive seventy times seven times - that is, do it until it is done, done, done. Not half-way, but completely ... perfectly.

In Hebrew, the word ‘*seven*’ is the same word as ‘*oath*’ or ‘*covenant*’ ... showing a commitment to do something ... all the way ... completely.

In the Church, we have seven Sacraments, covering the entirety of our Christian life.

Today we celebrate Pentecost Sunday. For Christians, Pentecost is 50 days after Easter.

Originally, Pentecost was the Jewish ‘*Feast of Weeks*,’ celebrating the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai 50 days after the Exodus from Egypt after the first Passover celebration.

As the ‘*Feast of Weeks*,’ it is seven weeks of seven days - hence 49 ... rounded up.

Easter corresponds to Passover, in that the first Passover commemorated God’s saving the first born of the Jews, where the angel of death ‘passed-over’ the Hebrew homes marked with the blood of the passover lamb.

In Easter, we have been saved from death by the blood of the Lamb of God, the Only Begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ.

After 49 days, Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai amidst thunder and lightning, clouds and fire.

Seven weeks after Easter, the Holy Spirit came in the rushing of wind and as tongues of flame.

The events of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who after His Ascension to the right hand of God, sent the Holy Spirit so that the Law of Love might be lived out among His disciples who are now the sons and daughters of God.

Traditionally, we speak of the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit; namely: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Reverence.

Yet, while much ink has been spilled on what each of these mean, in the Scriptural sense just spoken of earlier, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are total and complete.

The Holy Spirit works within us to build up the Body of Christ and to bring the message of the Gospel out to the world in manifold ... in infinite ways.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray for a deeper outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May we be empowered by these gifts of grace so as to live out the Law of Love ... the Law of Christ ... not only to *“love God and neighbor,”* but also to *“love one another as [Christ] has loved [us.]”*