



In support of our patients, their families and our employees, faculty members and students, this information is offered as a resource about the Christian holy day Pentecost.

History and Meaning

Pentecost celebrates the Holy Spirit's descent on Jesus' disciples after his Ascension into heaven. This holiday is celebrated on the seventh Sunday (50th day) after Easter. Pentecost is referred to as the birthday of the church, and because it is a popular time for baptism, it is commonly called White Sunday or Whitsunday for the white garments that the newly baptized wear.

Relevant Observances

- In Western churches, priests commonly wear red to symbolize the "tongues of fire" that descended on the disciples from the Holy Spirit. The altar is also commonly dressed in a red frontal cloth.
- The Eastern icon represents the Great Feast of Pentecost. At the top of the icon, a circle signifies heaven and from its center, 12 rays point downward toward the 12 apostles, symbolizing the Holy Spirit's descent. The Western painting emphasizes the tongues of fire, the presence of the Holy Mother of God and the 12 apostles.
- There are no specific Pentecost foods, but it is considered a feast day, so food is available in abundance.

Tips for Supporting Patient Care

- Patients may request special food and drinks. This should be allowed if medically appropriate.
- Patients may want to have visitors during the evening hours.

Tips for Supporting Staff Members, Faculty Members and Students:

- Employees, faculty members and students may request this time off. This should be allowed.

For More Information

Please contact the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at diversity@jhmi.edu or Paula Teague, senior director of the Department of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy, at pteague1@jhmi.edu.