

## **Solemnity of Pentecost Sunday C/2013**

The readings of this solemnity of Pentecost talk about the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. They show that the Holy Spirit is the main agent of the transformation of the first community of the believers and of the Church. They invite us to let ourselves be led by the Spirit so that we may please God.

The first reading of the Acts of the Apostles describes the historical context of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early Church and the effects of his presence on the disciples. It shows that it was at the occasion of the Jewish feast of Pentecost celebrated in commemoration of the giving of the Law to Moses that the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples.

As the disciples were all gathered together, the Spirit came on them under the form of tongues of fire. They all started speaking in different languages as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. But curiously, the Jews from other nations who were gathered in Jerusalem for the feast heard them speaking, each in his own language. They were all amazed at the phenomenon as they heard them proclaiming the mighty deeds of God in their own language.

What is behind this text is the idea that God is capable of unifying various people in one people through the power of his Spirit, in spite of their national, racial, cultural and linguistic differences. Another idea is the truth that the Holy Spirit transforms everything he touches to the point that various people can listen to each other and hear each other. The last idea is the recognition that it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is at work in the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

This text allows us to understand what is at stake in today's Gospel as Jesus is talking about the Spirit he will send from the Father on the apostles. First of all, Jesus makes a distinction between the one who loves him and the one who does not. While the one who loves him keeps his word, the other does not.

Jesus says also that the word he is pronouncing is not his own, but that of his Father. Given such a truth, it follows that the one who loves him and keeps his word, is loved also by the Father. As consequence, the Father and Jesus will come and dwell in him.

Finally, Jesus assures his disciples about the sending of the Holy Spirit who will come from his Father. That Spirit will be with them not for a while, but forever. Moreover, once he will be there, he will teach and remind them of all his teaching.

What do we learn from these readings? The first point I want to bring is the importance of becoming a community. In fact, the Acts of the Apostles reveal that the crowds of the pilgrims in Jerusalem that day were astonished to hear the disciples speaking in their tongues of the mighty deeds of God.

Such astonishment was legitimate because, as human beings, we are limited in our knowledge and in our nature. We know only the languages we have learned. As there are as many languages in the world as there are people, it is impossible to know all of them. That is why it happens that the first obstacle to bring people together is sometimes the language.

Moreover, by nature we are different and come from different backgrounds. Because of those differences, our ways of being, acting and living are also different. And yet, in Jesus Christ, we are called to become the one people of God, the community of the believers, sharing in the same faith and living the same commitments before God and his Church.

If, then, we stick to our individualities or particularities, we will never become a unified community. Of course, there is no denial of individual riches and particularity; what is at stake is the fact that in order to become a community we need to hold to what unites us rather than what divides us. To dwell in our differences creates division and enmity.

That is why listening to and obeying the Holy Spirit helps bring people together beyond their linguistic, racial, national or cultural differences. The Holy Spirit aims at uniting people rather than dividing them. In that perspective, we understand why the Holy Spirit is an agent of unification and universality of the Church.

The second point I want to bring is about the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The Gospel says that the Holy Spirit will teach you and remind you..." According to these words, the role of the Holy Spirit is double. He is a teacher and he is a reminder. Does it mean, by saying that the Spirit teaches us, that Jesus did not teach us what he should? Not at all; what it means is that in the new situations and new problems we will be facing over time, the Holy Spirit will teach us how to remain faithful to Jesus. That is why we are perpetual learners of the things of God until the end of our life.

Why should the Holy Spirit remind us things as though we did not have memory? Once again, as the Church grows over time and all over the world, we will be confronted with new situations, new contexts and new issues. It is, then, the role of the Spirit to bring us back to the essentials of our faith so that we remain always on the right path of the teaching of Jesus.

The feast of Pentecost reminds us that without the Holy Spirit, it would be difficult for us to please God. Only the Holy Spirit can allow us to live in the paternity of the Father where we can call God "Abba" and where we become his adopted children and heirs with Jesus.

Pentecost's celebration reminds that it is the Spirit who keeps us in fidelity to the love of God and our fellows, because whoever does not have him cannot belong to Christ. That is why at Pentecost, we have to long for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us.

Let us pray, then, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we might be guided to do the will of God in our life. May the Holy Spirit inflame the whole Church and plant love in the hearts of its members! May he inflame the heart of each one of those who seek God in sincerity and humility! May God bless you all!

**Acts 2: 1-11; Romans 8: 8-17; John 14: 15-16, 23b-26**



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