

## **The Vigil of Pentecost C2022**

I want to start the homily of this Vigil of Pentecost with an observation that can allow us understand the role and the place of the Holy Spirit in our lives and that of the Church. There is in each one of us a deep duality, a permanent conflict between good and evil.

We all have two opposing sides: one positive and other negative. The positive side is what makes us enjoyable persons, pleasant and full of all the good qualities we can name. The good side of ours is what makes us, at our best, wonderful persons. The negative side is what makes us, at our worst, nasty, inconsistent, unpleasant and horrible persons.

These two sides of ours are in constant war within us. They can influence everything we do in one way or another, especially our relationship with God and with others. The first reading of this Pentecost's Vigil shows how human beings who were speaking a same language, when taken by human pride and ambition, wanted to equal God in majesty and undertaking. From that human ambition came out the drama of Babel.

The drama of Babel is the symbol of human duality and infighting within us. Instructed by such a reality St Paul claims that the whole of "creation", including ourselves, "is groaning in labor pains, waiting for adoption and the redemption of our bodies". Against the background of such a duality, the Holy Spirit is given us in order to heal us and makes us whole again.

As we turn to the doctors or the counselors for therapy when we feel inadequacy in the affirmation of our personality, so God has given us the Holy Spirit to be our spiritual therapist. The Holy Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness so that we pray in a way that is pleasing to God. He intercedes for us according to God's will.

The Holy Spirit is an agent of unification. He brings people together beyond their linguistic, racial, national or cultural differences, not that they oppose God, but rather that they do his will. Where people dig into conflicts of interest and fight against each other because they are different, the Spirit of Jesus is likely absent among them. The Holy Spirit aims at uniting people rather than dividing them. He works at planting peace rather than conflicts and wars.

At the beginning of the Church, as the disciples were locked up in a room for fear of the Jews, the Holy Spirit gave them courage, emboldening them to go out and talk about the crucified and risen Lord. Strengthened by him they understood that they had a defender greater than the Jewish Law. Therefore, they could speak without fear and cross the barriers erected by the Jewish Law.

The Holy Spirit is at the foundation of the universality of the Church. He opens the doors of people's hearts; he breaks the barriers that divide peoples and nations so that all come together as one people, the people of God, united in our faith and one baptism, in Jesus Christ. To pay attention to the universality of the Church is to accept the gifts the Holy Spirit gives to God's people in order to build the body of Christ and enrich the Church.

The Holy Spirit sets us free from the bondage of sin so that we do what is pleasing to God and not what is contrary to his commandments. If we listen to him in our lives and practice what he requires of us, we will receive eternal life. He will himself dwell in us and give immortality to our mortal bodies. That is why St Paul claims that “If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies”.

For sure, we will not be spared from physical death. But, though we would physically die, we will be given life back, because of the Spirit living within us, just as it happened to Jesus.

By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us, we become the adopted children of God and heirs with Jesus. The merits of Christ and his glory become ours. His heritage becomes our inheritance, his Father becomes our father. Sharing in his suffering and death, we also share in his glory. Because we have a same destiny with Jesus, when his Father looks at us, he recognizes in us his beloved Son, Jesus.

The celebration of Pentecost’s reminds that it is the Holy Spirit who guides us to the knowledge of the whole truth about God and our salvation. It is the Holy Spirit who keeps us faithful to the love of God and our fellows. Listening to him allows us to keep Jesus’ commandments and thereby to show our love of him. That is why we have to yearn not only to possess the Holy Spirit, but also to be docile to his recommendations.

The renewal of our life and faith depends on how we are obedient to the Holy Spirit so that we do not give in to the solicitations of the flesh. Our faithfulness to Jesus depends on how we keep his word and his commandments by living of them. There is no love of Jesus without keeping his commandments and his word.

It is the Holy Spirit who allows us to keep Jesus word and commandment. If we do so, the Father will love us, because we love his Son. Because we love the Father and the Son by keeping the commandments, they will come to us and make their dwelling within us. With the Father and the Son dwelling within us, we become ourselves the temple of God and the witness to the Holy Spirit guiding us.

Let us pray on this feast of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit will inflame the whole Church and guides it. Let us ask the courage to allow the Holy Spirit take control of our lives. Let us pray that Pentecost might happen in the heart of each one us so that we seek always to please God. May God bless you all!

**Genesis 11: 1-9; Romans 8: 22-27; John 7: 37-39**



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