

Pentecost Sunday C2022

With the whole church, we celebrate today the feast of Pentecost. The readings of this Solemnity invite us to reflect on the role of the Holy Spirit and his impact in our lives and in the life of the Church.

The feast of Pentecost is deeply rooted in the Jewish tradition. In Israel, the Passover was the commemoration of the liberation from Egypt. Fifty days after the Passover was the celebration of the gift of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The giving of the law to Moses was considered in Jewish collective imagination as the beginning of the juridical foundation of Israel as a nation under God's guidance.

Like in the Jewish Tradition, the Feast of Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Easter as the commemoration of the gift of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. The intent by doing so is to remind us that it is not the Law of Moses that is the foundation of Christian community, but the new law that the Spirit of Christ has brought.

Such a vision makes clear the words of Jesus in today's Gospel when he says, "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you".

The Holy Spirit is the guarantor of the teaching of Jesus and the enabler of the faithfulness to him over time. As the Church grows in the world and meets new challenges and issues, it is the Holy Spirit who helps her cope with these new situations without deviating from the initial message of Jesus.

From the beginning of the Church, it was the Holy Spirit who gave courage to the fearful disciples, 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 Acts of the Apostles describe the miracle of the transformation that happened at that time when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. They spoke foreign languages and brought together people from all over the world. And yet, the Law of Moses prohibited the Jews to have any relationship with a pagan or a foreigner. Once the disciples were invested with the Holy Spirit, everything changed. They welcomed all the peoples from the known world of their time and proclaimed to them Jesus' message of salvation.

As it can be seen, the Holy Spirit is the agent of unification. He brings people together beyond their linguistic, racial, national or cultural differences. 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. This is true for a parish community, for family's members or a group of people.

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 people in order to build the body of Christ and enrich the Church.

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

The Holy Spirit enables us to call God “Abba, Father!” By his indwelling 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 in us, we become ourselves the temple of God and witness to the Holy Spirit guiding us.

Let us pray so that the Holy Spirit inflames the whole Church and guides it. Let us ask the courage to allow the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives. Let us pray that Pentecost might happen in the heart of each one of those who seek sincerely God. May God bless you all!

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



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