

## **Theological Reflection Pentecost – “Come Holy Spirit”**

We are in those days in the Church’s “Year of Grace” when we remember Mary and the Apostles, and many other men and women gathered in the Upper Room. In obedience they have all come there to pray in preparation for the descent of the Holy Spirit. All would receive the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, and Mary who knew God’s Spirit most intimately would receive even more of God as she receives the grace to be the Mother of the Church. So we pray to her during these days, these novena days, that we be faithful sons and daughters of the Church. God’s Spirit can help each of us to “keep the faith.” Mary’s prayer to the Holy Spirit, who fashioned her into a new creature in the Father’s plan, is that each of us be docile to God the potter’s touch this Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and Son. He reveals the depths of God while he remains hidden, always in the shadows. “He is in the very heart of every creature and gives life to every living thing, but remains ‘Spirit.’” (Int. p. 12 of The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life) This previous sentence helps us to understand the words of the Creed prayed in reference to the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. All that touches or reaches humanity comes through the Holy Spirit.

All that we know through the gift of faith, all understanding of the mystery of God, every noble thought, every prayer is through the power of the Holy Spirit. God in his infinite wisdom has arranged that His creatures are able to understand God himself by the power of the Holy Spirit even though He is ineffable, beyond human understanding. We cannot understand life or reality without the Holy Spirit. We cannot experience God in the Scriptures without the Spirit’s help.

For all of God’s followers who have been baptized in the Spirit this previous sentence makes perfect sense, since with the release of the Holy Spirit Sacred Scripture came alive and become understandable in a new way. The Holy Spirit introduces the reader to Jesus and deepens this relationship with the personal Lord. This new life given by the Spirit opens us to receive more of God. It is God in his goodness who continues to do more and more for his sons and daughters. The Spirit who makes loving community within the Trinity does the same outside the Trinity. He builds a loving community in the Church and in this world. We, through Him, live in a loving communion with God. It is the Spirit who presents to mankind the providential plan of God. All of God’s self-communication that is creation, the conception of Jesus in the womb, the public life and teaching of Jesus is done through the Holy Spirit!

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Jesus promised the sending of the Holy Spirit. He would send this other Paraclete, another Intercessor, after his Ascension. We pray to Jesus that he would send us the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that anointed him at his Baptism. The Spirit led Jesus throughout his public life and now makes Jesus present to us. We live in the era or age of the Holy Spirit and so it has been from that first Pentecost until the final coming of the Lord. Jesus acts in his Church as the Risen Lord. He acts through others because of his existence in the Spirit. As St. Basil said in the history of salvation, “everything is accomplished through the Spirit.” Throughout time beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God has renewed the face of the earth by the sending of the Holy Spirit. In our own era He sent a new wave of the Spirit upon the Protestant churches in 1900, and 67 years later the wave washed over those retreat participants at Duquesne University. We are part of the New Springtime in the Church. We are believers who know what we know through the Spirit.

The House of Prayer, Marian Servants and the Cenacle exist because God has raised it up by calling to this work people renewed by his very Spirit. We continue the work because of the Spirit’s prompting and steadfast love. We seek to do God’s will and to know and love His Holy Spirit more.

The more we know the Holy Spirit the greater our love for the Father and the Son. Our love for God’s Holy Spirit increases as we encounter him in our lives, prayers and in Scripture. The Theological-Historical Commission in preparation for the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 made this startling statement, “...the ultimate goal of the incarnation, besides the glorification of the Father, consists in communicating the Spirit to human beings...” What an amazing statement. This echoes St. Athanasius’ words, “The Word became flesh so that he would be able to receive the Holy Spirit.” God took on flesh, so man could take on divinity, and like him receive the Holy Spirit.

Charismatics understand that the same Spirit who acted in Jesus is now available to them that they might do the very same acts that Jesus performed. I remember in the beginning of my “walking in the Spirit” 30 years ago praying healing prayer and wondering if it was Jesus or the Spirit working when people felt heat, peace and experienced healing. St. Irenaeus from the third century could have explained to me, “Communion with Christ is the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is the image of the Son just as the Son is the image of the Father. Just as meeting Jesus, as he walked the streets of Galilee and Jerusalem, changed people’s lives, so today meeting Jesus through his Spirit changes our lives and definitely changed my life and that of Adrienne’s. Little did we know what awaited us in Florida as we

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enjoyed a quiet life in the beautiful hills of West Virginia! Each of you reading this can attest to the before and after phenomenon of meeting the Holy Spirit. We all know the “healing grace” of the Spirit. This grace makes us a friend of Jesus. So when others hear us speak, witness, or teach they realize that we know Jesus. God walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden and the Spirit walks with us each day. It was God’s Spirit that convinced St. Augustine of Jesus’ saving power and helped him to abandon himself to God’s mercy and love. He marvels at what the Spirit had done in him: “I came to love you late, O Beauty so ancient and so new; I came to love you late. You were within me and I was outside, where I rushed about wildly searching for you like some monster loose in your beautiful world. You were with me but I was not with you, you called me, you shouted to me, you broke past my deafness. You bathed me in your light, you wrapped me in your splendor, you sent my blindness reeling.” We ask the Holy Spirit to charge every part of our lives with eternal meaning as his heavenly light shines upon us.

So we pray that we present no obstacles to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. Have your way with us Holy Spirit; make us true friends of Jesus, and your servants in this world until Jesus comes again.

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