

HOLY PENTECOST

June 7, 2020



Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise, having sent upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou hast fished the universe, O Lover of mankind, glory to Thee.

IRENÆUS OF LYONS

Bishop
†c.202

~ from *Against Heresies, Book II, Chapter 17: on the sending down of the Holy Spirit* ~

THE SPIRIT OF GOD descended upon the Savior as a dove, the Spirit of Whom Isaiah declared: *The Spirit of God shall rest upon Him, (Isaiah 11:2a)* and also: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because of which He anointed Me. (Isaiah 61:1)* This is the Spirit of Whom the Lord declares: *It is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you. (Matthew 10:20)* Giving to the disciples the power of regeneration into God, He said to them, *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)* For God had promised that in the last days He would pour His Spirit upon His servants, that they might prophesy. Wherefore, the Spirit also descended upon the Son of God when He became the Son of man, in this way becoming accustomed, in fellowship with Him, to dwell in the human race, to rest with human beings and to dwell in the workmanship of God, working the will of the Father in them, and renewing them from their old habits into new life in Christ.

This is the Spirit that David asked for the human race, when he said, *with Thy governing Spirit establish me. (Psalm 50:12)* This is the Spirit Who Luke says descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's Ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life and to open to them the New Covenant. This is the Spirit by Whom the apostles, with one accord and in all languages, uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter, Who would join us to God. For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed from dry wheat without moisture nor can a loaf possess unity, so also, in like manner, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not bring forth unless it receives moisture, in like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life without the voluntary rain from above. For we have become one in body through the laver of baptism which leads to incorruption; and we have become one in soul through the Spirit. Both are necessary, since both contribute towards life in God. Our Lord showed compassion to the erring Samaritan woman by revealing to her and promising her the living water, so that she should thirst no more, having in herself water springing up to eternal life. The Lord, receiving this as a gift from His Father, Himself also confers this gift upon those who are partakers of Himself, sending the Holy Spirit upon all the earth.

God conferred *the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness, the Spirit of the fear of God (Isaiah 11:2b-3a)* upon the Church, sending throughout all the world the Comforter from heaven, from whence also the Lord tells us that the devil, like lightning, was cast down. *(Luke 10:18)* Wherefore we have need of the dew of God, so that we are not consumed by fire nor rendered unfruitful. We have need of the dew of God so that whereas we have an accuser, we may have an Advocate as well. The Lord entrusted to the Holy Spirit the man who had fallen among thieves: He had compassion upon him, binding up his wounds and giving two royal coins for his care. In like manner, we, receiving through the Spirit the image and inscription of the Father and the Son, have a duty to properly use the coin entrusted to us, that it might become fruitful, yielding great profit for the Lord. *Amen.*

ST. LEO THE GREAT

Pope of Rome

†461

~ from a homily on the Feast of Pentecost ~

DEARLY BELOVED, all Christians know in their hearts that Pentecost is to be esteemed as one of the most important festivals. There is no question but that we owe great reverence to that day which the Holy Spirit has sanctified by His most excellent and wondrous Gift. For this is the tenth day since the Lord ascended high above all heavens to sit down at the right hand of God the Father, and it is the fiftieth since His Resurrection, whereon the Lord initiated and made manifest mighty mysteries, binding together the Old and New Covenants; thereby plainly revealing that grace was foreshadowed by the Law, and that the Law has been perfected by grace. For as of old, when the Hebrews had been freed from the yoke of the Egyptians, the Law was given on Mount Sinai on the fiftieth day after the sacrifice of the Passover lamb; so after the Passion when the true Lamb of God was slain, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and upon the company of believers on the fiftieth day after His Resurrection, in order that the faithful Christian might truly perceive that the mysteries of the Old Testament provide the foundations of the Gospel, and that the second Covenant was established by the same Spirit which had instituted the first.

From this day, therefore, the preaching of the Gospel has sounded forth like a trumpet; from this day the gentle rain of the gifts of the Spirit, the rivers of blessings, have watered all the dry and thirsty desert. For the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters, that He might renew the face of the earth; the new flames shone forth to chase away the old darkness with the brilliancy of fiery tongues and the clarity of the Word of God; flaming eloquence is conceived, from which proceeds understanding, and the doing away of sins, through the Spirit's power of consuming and enlightening as by fire. *Amen.*

