

Pentecost 2019 SML
JN 20:19-23

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

It's 50 days now since the startling news that the troublesome fellow from Galilee was alive again. At one time, he had a pretty big following. There were over 5000 when he did the trick with the kid's bread and fish. But, you know, they've dwindled down now. Somebody said they're down to about 12. And they're hiding out somewhere, scared as a rabbit in a lion's den. But they seem to be waiting for something. Don't know what it is, but it's going to be something big. We're keeping an eye out for them.

For nine days, from Ascension Thursday, to Pentecost Sunday, the Apostles, along with the Blessed Mother, prayed the very first novena. For nine days, they prayed in the Upper Room for something to happen. They knew the Holy Spirit was coming because, during the Last Supper, Jesus drilled the Apostles over and over again about the coming of the Holy Spirit:

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you always, the Spirit of Truth.” (JN 14:16)

“I have told you this while I am still with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, that the Father will send in my name – he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.” (JN 14:26)

“When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, he will testify to me.” (JN 15:26)

“But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (JN 16:6)

“But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you to all truth.” (JN 16:13)

The Apostles knew the Holy Spirit was coming but they did not know the when, the where, the how, or, the what of the Holy Spirit’s descent. The unknown is always a source of tension. And so, added to the doubts of the apostles was fear which prompted them to close the doors and to bolt them, lest the representatives of the Sanhedrin break in to arrest them on the false charge of stealing the Body or setting up an imposter to say he rose from the dead. There was also the fear that possibly the people might storm, as they often did, the houses of those who were unpopular. So the doors were shut, and:

- ✓ the mental anguish,
- ✓ the emotional suffering,
- ✓ the tension

was so thick, you could have cut it with a knife.

1. The when was ten days after the Ascension, 50 days after the Resurrection; “When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled” is a

reference to the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, which recalled the giving of the law to Moses, which occurred on the fiftieth day of the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. So the when was during the Jewish Feast of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. (AA 2)

2. The where was in the Upper Room
3. The how was in the form of tongues of fire
4. The what was Jesus taking on a new body, from a human body born of Mary, to a mystical body in the Catholic Church.

Some of what Jesus taught the Apostles in His human body dealt with His “mystical body:”

1. Members will be born into the church, not through a human birth but through a spiritual one, namely **baptism** (JN 3)
2. The unity in the church would not be through singing hymns, not through social teas, but **united in Him**. I am the vine, you are the branches.
3. The **Church would grow**, “like a mustard seed,” like corn, “first the blade, then the ear, then full grown ear of corn.” MK 4:28
4. The **life of the Church comes from the Son** and the life of the Son comes from the Father.
5. Jesus also said the Church would be one. There will be **one flock, one shepherd**. JN 10
6. **None of this will start until Pentecost**. “If I do not go, the Advocate will not come.” (JN 16) Anything that sprouts 24 hours after Pentecost or 24 hours ago will have human spirit,

but not Divine Spirit. To this point, I'd like to interject part of a homily preached by a Catholic priest friend of mine who was formerly an Episcopalian priest. He preached this on Pentecost Sunday, one week after his ordination to the Catholic priesthood:

Last Saturday in the Cathedral in Trenton, I was very much aware of those disciples on Pentecost, and all the countless people who have come between them and us, as I received in a new way the gift of the priesthood. If you can't tell I am excited about the Church, and I am excited about the priesthood. But as I talked to those ordained with me, I realized it was a little different for me. In the beginning there is some infatuation, the newness of the priesthood. I've done all that before. Yes, I'll stumble over a few words here and there that are different from the words I prayed as an Episcopal priest. More profoundly is the sense I feel at being part of the Church that goes back directly to that Pentecost day.

7. And the Church would be hated. "Because I have chosen you out of the world, the world hates you."

Many who do not believe in Christ now think they would have believed in Him if they had lived in His day. Actually, there would have been no great advantage. Those who do not see Him as divine, living in His mystical body today, would not have seen Him as divine, living in His physical body yesterday. Christ still walks the earth in His new body, the Church:

1. And He is still denied inns as He was in Bethlehem, that are now classrooms in public schools;

2. New Herods with names other than Christian persecute Him with the sword and bash Him in the media.
3. Other Satans appear in the desert to tempt Him to short cuts of popularity away from the Cross.
4. Palm Sundays of great triumph still occur, but they are still preludes to Good Fridays.
5. New charges are hurled against Him by a fixed mindset.
6. Separation of Church and state still accuses Him to be the enemy of Caesar.
7. There were still Judases within the Church who handed Him over - priests from yesteryear who molested children; but thank God that bleeding has stopped with only one credible allegation this past year, yet one is one too many.
8. There are still disciples who walk with Him no more because His teaching is too hard; but no one ever became a Catholic because of moral laxity

But there is never a death without a resurrection. And by the end of time, Jesus' new body, the Church, the Catholic Church will have undergone a thousand deaths and a thousand resurrections, and I am privileged to be a part of Her. I am privileged to be one of Her shepherds, one of Her priests.

So yes, Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth.