

Singing Our Faith **Solemnity of Pentecost – May 20, 2018**

It happens a few times a year – we sing an “extra hymn” after the second reading. Chances are it’s unfamiliar to the assembly because, well, they haven’t heard it for a year! This is known as the Sequence. This weekend, we sing the Pentecost Sequence “Veni, Sancte Spiritus,” translated “Come, Holy Spirit,” which is found below.

So first, why the term “Sequence?” Centuries ago, the end of the Alleluia before the gospel would have a musical sequence that rose higher and higher at each repetition as the deacon or priest went up the steps of the ambo. The raising of the pitch mirrored the minister’s ascent to proclaim the gospel. Since Sequences have always been written in the form of hymns, they are also called “Prose,” which more accurately reflects their literary style. It’s also worth mentioning that, while we sing the Sequence **before** the gospel acclamation, the traditional place for the Sequence is **after** the alleluia (gospel acclamation), sort of like an extended gospel acclamation verse.

The number of Sequences was significant by the time of the Council of Trent (1543–1563). The Pope St. Pius V Missal from 1570 reduced the many number of Sequences in the Roman Rite to four:

Victimae Paschali Laudes for Easter (**still required today**)

Veni Sancte Spiritus for Pentecost (**still required today**)

Lauda Sion Salvatorem for Corpus Christi (**optional today**)

Dies Irae for All Souls and in Masses for the Dead (**optional today**)

Singing Our Faith **Solemnity of Pentecost – May 20, 2018**

Nearly 150 years after St. Pius V's changes, the 13th century Stabat Mater (At the Cross Her Station Keeping) for Our Lady of Sorrows was added as an optional Sequence to this list, bringing the total to the number five.

Since Sequences are not often used today, not a lot has been written about their liturgical function. Fr. Pius Parsch, a leader of the liturgical movement in the 20th century, puts it best – “The Sequence fulfills the congregation’s desire for extended expression of the beauty inherent in the Alleluia, with the practical role being the Sequence serves as processional music for the deacon or priest.” The beautiful sequence texts that we sing on the Sundays Easter and Pentecost aim to foster meditation of the assembly. While it may seem like “just another hymn” to us, in the early days of its existence, the Sequence was often times the only non-scripture based music sung at Mass. Considering that, the Sequence was a **human** expression of faith snuck in to the liturgy amid **divinely inspired** scripture texts sung at the different parts of the Mass. Like many prayers and hymns of our Catholic tradition, the fact that Sequences like “Veni, Sancte Spiritus” have survived the test of time speaks volumes to the beauty and richness of its expression of faith.

Stephen Eros

Director of Liturgy and Music

Singing Our Faith
Solemnity of Pentecost – May 20, 2018



1. Ho - ly Spir - it, Lord Di - vine, Come, from heights of
2. Come, O Fa - ther of the poor, Come, whose treas - ured



heav'n and shine, Come with bless - ed ra - diance bright!
gifts en - dure, Come, our heart's un - fail - ing light!



3. Of con - sol - ers, wis - est, best, And our soul's most
4. In our la - bor rest most sweet, Pleas - ant cool - ness



wel - come guest, Sweet re - fresh - ment, sweet re - pose.
in the heat, Con - so - la - tion in our woes.



5. Light most bless - ed, shine with grace In our heart's most
6. Left with - out your pres - ence here, Life it - self would



se - cret place, Fill your faith - ful through and through.
dis - ap - pear, Noth - ing thrives a - part from you!



7. Cleanse our soil - ed hearts of sin, Ar - id souls re -
8. Bend the stub - born heart and will, Melt the fro - zen,

Singing Our Faith
Solemnity of Pentecost – May 20, 2018



fresh with - in, Wound - ed lives to health re - store.
warm the chill, Guide the way - ward home once more!



9. On the faith - ful who are true And pro -
10. Give us vir - tue's sure re - ward, Give us



fess their faith in you, In your sev'n - fold gift de - scend!
your sal - va - tion, Lord, Give us joys that nev - er end!

Text: Sequence for Pentecost, 13th. C.; tr. by Peter J. Scagnelli; b.1949, © 1983
Tune: Mode I; acc. by Adriaan Engels, 1906–2003