

Pentecost 2017

“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit”. Our Lord fulfilled the promise that he would be with them in a new way with this powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As an event we can perhaps liken it to the spectacular display of a new fountain or the power released by a new hydro-electric dam, but the gift of the Spirit is not a one off event but continues throughout time just as a fountain or dam continues to benefit generations that follow. Christ glorified at the right hand of the Father continues to fulfil his promise, sending upon the Church the life-giving Spirit, who, in the words of Pope Francis, *teaches us, reminds us, and lets us speak*.

The Holy Spirit *teaches us*: he is the Interior Master. He guides us along the right path, through life’s challenges. He teaches us the path, the way. In the early times of the Church, Christianity was called “the way” (cf. Acts 9:2), and Jesus himself is the Way. The Holy Spirit teaches us to follow him, to walk in his footprints. The Holy Spirit is a master of life as well as the one who brings knowledge and understanding.

The Holy Spirit *reminds us*, he reminds us of all that Jesus said. He is the living memory of the Church, and when he reminds us, he helps us to understand the words of the Lord. Memory helps us to be aware of who we are and who we are called to be. A Christian without memory is only halfway to being a true Christian - a prisoner of the moment. With the help of the Holy Spirit, however, we are able to interpret interior inspirations and life events in light of Jesus’ words. In this way we grow in self-awareness - a gift of the Spirit. We can move forward toward the person God wants us to be.

The Holy Spirit *lets us speak*, with God and with men. The apostles cannot stay silent – they burst out spontaneously into praise of God and want to speak about him to those around them despite ridicule or hostility. The Spirit enables us to speak with God in *prayer*. He prays in us and allows us to call God Abba - Father. He enables us to speak in faith. Without the Holy Spirit, none of us is able to say: “Jesus is Lord”. He enables us to speak with others in faith and love, recognizing them as brothers and sisters; to speak with friendship, with tenderness, with compassion, understanding their heartaches and hopes, sorrows and joys. He speaks through us to others in ways of which we may be unaware. Charged with the Spirit of love we can be signs and instruments of God who loves, who serves and who gives life.

The day of Pentecost, when the disciples “were all filled with the Holy Spirit”, was the baptism of the Church. The Church was born precisely with the mission to go out to the whole world and bring the gifts of the Spirit to others. In his address on Wednesday Pope Francis spoke of how the Holy Spirit fills us with hope and like the wind in a sail this drives us forward. How could He who gave us His only Son not give us everything else together with Him? The Holy Spirit make us capable of hoping, but also to be *sowers of hope*, to be “*paracletes*,” namely consolers and defenders of our brothers and sisters. He adds, “It is above all the poor, the excluded, the unloved that are in need of someone who will be a “paraclete” to them, namely, a consoler and defender, as the Holy Spirit is with every one of us – consoler and defender.” May we go out today and bring the life-giving love of God to all we meet but especially those most in need of his love and mercy!