

## PENTECOST: WE CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Nobody will ever succeed in becoming a Christ-like person by studying his human behavior and then trying to replicate it in their own. It just can't be done. Failure is inevitable, and if we think we've succeeded, then others will have their own thoughts. At best they'll think we are second-rate actors and at worst they'll think we are first rate hypocrites. The only way to become a Christ-like person is to allow the same Spirit who animated and inspired him to animate and inspire us also. Prayer is the word used by Christian tradition to describe how serious minded believers open themselves to this Spirit. (David Torkington)

The approach (of the Holy Spirit) is gentle, his presence fragrant, his yoke very light; rays of light and knowledge shine forth before him as he comes. He comes with the heart of a true protector, he comes to save, to heal, to teach, to admonish, to strengthen, to console, to enlighten the mind, first of the man who receives him, then through him the minds of others also. (St Cyril of Jerusalem *Catechesis* 16)

It is not only through the sacraments and ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit sanctifies the people, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts as he wills, he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church, as it is written: "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit" (I Cor 12.7). Whether these charisms (gifts) be very remarkable or more simple and widely diffused, they are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation since they are fitting for the needs of the Church. (Second Vatican Council *Lumen Gentium* n12)

Now the love of God was to gather together the Church over all the world. Consequently, while a single man, if he received the Holy Spirit, could speak in every tongue, now the Church in its unity, which is established by the Holy Spirit, speaks in every tongue. And so if anyone says to one of us: "You have received The Holy Spirit; why do you not speak in tongues?" he should reply: "I do speak in every tongue. For I am in the Body of Christ, the Church, which speaks in every tongue. For what did God signify by the presence of the Holy Spirit if it was not that his Church would speak in every tongue?" (Sermon of an unknown 6<sup>th</sup> century African author)

The Spirit of God came down on the Lord. He gave the same Spirit again to the Church, sending the Counsellor to every nation from heaven, from which the Lord said "the devil was cast down like lightening." (Lk 10.18) Accordingly we need God's dew, so as not to be burnt up and made unfruitful but rather to have a Counsellor when we have an accuser. For the Lord entrusts to the Holy Spirit his man who had fallen among thieves. Taking pity on him he has bound up his wounds, and given him two imperial coins, stamped with the image of the Spirit and the inscription of the Father and the Son. We are to accept them, and to make the coin entrusted to us bear fruit and multiply for the Lord. (St Irenaeus *Against the Heresies* Bk 3, 17)