

Pentecost A 200531 for Video

R Acts 2:1-11; Ps 104; Romans 8:8-17; John 14:15-16,23b-26
C/W Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104; Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Whenever it falls to me to speak talk, or write about the Holy Spirit, I feel a bit like the old monk Seraphim, although I don't possess his holiness or gifts!

There is a story told about this old Russian Orthodox monk called Seraphim. A friend one day came to him and said, "Brother Seraphim, can you help me? For a long time I have wanted to write a few words about the Holy Spirit and the moment I try to put pen to paper I just can't start. I wonder if you could help me."

At once Seraphim's face lit up and he was just about to speak when the man said, "Stop. You don't have to tell me. The happiness and joy in your face says it all." How right he was. That is the fruit of mysticism!

It is very hard to use words to describe the Holy Spirit. We learn about Him mainly from the effects He produces in the Church and the saints. Just see the effect He had on the apostles at Pentecost. But not only that, the power and effects he has in our own lives!

Before Pentecost you could describe the Apostles as weaklings. They could not even lift their little finger to come to Jesus' aid. One betrayed Him, another denied Him and the rest, apart from St. John, ran away.

Once the Holy Spirit descended upon them they were changed men, fearless, only too happy to suffer and even face death for Jesus.

So we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, the Jewish feast day on which the Holy Spirit came in all his fullness to activate the Christian Church.

Pentecost, meaning "fifty days" after the Passover -- was the feast day in which the Jewish people celebrated the Covenant and Giving of the Law. But before the destruction of the Temple in a.d. 70, it also had strong agricultural offering significance and known as the Festival of Weeks – which was why so many Hebrews and others who followed the faith, were in Jerusalem at that time.

The Church celebrates the Feast, fifty days after Easter, ***our*** Passover, when the Holy Spirit descended upon our Blessed Lady, the apostles and disciples of the Lord, and also became available to each and every one of us.

The Holy Spirit was present at the beginning of creation, hovering over, creating, guiding the evolution of the universe and latterly, the earth.

He was given individually to the Patriarchs, the Prophets, to John the Baptist, to Our Lady – to name but a few. But he was only given to each and every Christian after the first Pentecost.

How do we envisage the Holy Spirit in our spiritual lives, our prayer and meditation and contemplation? Of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, he is the most mystical to conceive. The Bible represents him in numerous ways: fire, water, a rushing mighty wind and a small and gentle voice.

Of course, we major on his reality and power within us, but our minds sometimes need to picture him. So I prefer the biblical image of that large and gentle dove as revealed at Jesus' Baptism, coming down upon us, bringing his fantastic Gifts and Fruit and Power into our daily lives. Hiding us in the shelter of his wings and empowering us to live vibrant Christian lives.

A whole Bible Study, no, a series of Bible studies would be needed to do a minimum justice of what the Holy Spirit brings as His Gifts, and what they produce as His Fruit. That would include Isaiah 11; 1 Corinthians 12; Romans 12 and Ephesians 4.

But an incomplete summary would be: The Gifts such as: Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healings, Miracles, Prophecy, The Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, The Interpretation of Tongues.

Then the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives from these gifts, especially from Galatians 5:22: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness and generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control. These are all available to us by the Fire of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, here and now, the big question is, "Are you and I on fire with the Holy Spirit?" If there is no joy in our lives, no love, no peace, no patience, in fact none of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. If so, we have imprisoned Him in our souls by the chains of our self will!

He is within us through our Baptism, Confirmation, in the Holy Eucharist and our life of prayer. But so often we allow Him to be dormant.

The Holy Spirit is the master of prayer. That wonderful mystic and freedom fighter, Gonville French-Beytagh, wrote, "***Prayer is the work, the activity, of the Holy Spirit of God moving within us. God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6). He is crying: we are giving words to his cry. . . . The Spirit himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:16,26).*** He goes on:

There is the idea of the Spirit breathing within us, taking us along with him, dragging us along even if we are unwilling. The Spirit is longing to take us on the wings of the Dove into the presence of God".

There is much more of course in Gonville's Book 'A Glimpse of Glory'.

We have to ***release*** The Holy Spirit's presence to fire us with His love. A wonderful prayer to say at the start of every day is "**Come, Holy Spirit, be my best Friend. Fill my heart and kindle it with the fire of your love.**" Amen.