

This (evening/morning) we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, the unleashing of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Church. While this was a defining and pivotal moment in the life of the Church, unfortunately, we treat it (I think) as an event of the past. And this is unfortunate. Many of us see the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles as a singular event; as something that empowered *them* to go forth and do what they did to get the Church moving and growing in the world. But as for us today, it can seem as little more than the remembrance of an incredible event, that occurred almost two millennia ago.

If we view Pentecost this way, then **we** are unfortunate and perhaps deceived fools. The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles was not just a **singular** event. It was the unleashing of God's abiding and guiding presence upon His Church into perpetuity. In layman's terms, this was the culmination of God's promise to be with and guide His Church, through its leaders, in every age to come.

I know this can be a hard pill for some to swallow; but if you examine every age of the Catholic Church, in spite of its good (as well as corrupt leaders) the deposit of faith and the challenge of Christ's teachings have never been compromised. This can only be due to the Holy Spirit's abiding presence in the Church. No matter **how far** some of our church leaders may have strayed from being true shepherds throughout the ages, the Holy Spirit's guidance and presence has always preserved the Church's union with Christ and his teachings.

While this is true, the Holy Spirit, unfortunately, seems to be (for many) an enigmatic arm of the Holy Trinity. While we can (to some degree) understand and appreciate the relationship of God the Father with God the Son through Jesus' intimations and analogies, it can be very difficult to see and understand the Holy Spirit's relationship with the Son and the Father. This is because it is not so easily gleaned in Scripture, although it *is* there.

What Scripture tells us is that the Holy Spirit is Jesus' resurrected presence acting and guiding the Church through its members; from the Pope on down through her Bishops, to her priests, and to the laity. The Holy Spirit sustains the life of the Church, which is Christ's body, of which we all are members of.

The Holy Spirit guides and leads the Church. The Holy Spirit is God's living guarantee that the salvation Jesus won for all humanity will always be proclaimed and offered to open hearts. With this in mind, more importantly, the Holy Spirit animates the members of Christ's Body, the Church, giving courage to her beloved who witness to the faith with their lives, even in death. This is the only way Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life continues to be manifest to the world. We are **all** pieces in this mosaic of God's love letter to the world; and the Holy Spirit is the person who urges us on and gives us the strength to be God's voice in a world that needs his good news, now more than ever.

So come Holy Spirit, in your sevenfold gift descend, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. And may that fire spread (through our authentic witness) to the ends of the earth.