



23 – 29 Sep, 2018

Living Pentecost, part 2

‘John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire’ Luke 3:16

The Holy Spirit and fire (Act 2:3)

- † At Pentecost , the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the appearance of *‘divided tongues, as of fire’* fulfills the prophecy of John the Baptist that Christ would *‘baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire’* (Luk 3:16)
- † Tongues of fire symbolize
 1. speech and the communication of the Gospel
 2. God’s purifying presence, which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others
- † On Mount Sinai, God confirmed the validity of the Old Testament law with fire from Heaven (Exo 19: 16-18). At Pentecost, God confirmed the validity of the Holy Spirit’s ministry by sending fire
- † The New Testament is the completion and fulfillment of the Old; at Mount Sinai, fire came down on one place while as at Pentecost, fire came down on many believers, symbolizing that God’s Holy Spirit is available to all who believe in Him

The Holy Spirit’s work is always in us hand in hand with power and assurance

- † Peter’s speech and the preaching of the Gospel comes *‘in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance’* (1 The 1:5)
- † The result on the recipients is always that they are *‘cut to the heart’* resulting in action, *‘brethren, what shall we do?’* (Act 2:37)
- † Those who listened to Peter became conscious of their sins and were born again since repentance is the prerequisite to conversion
- † Faith involves action. Faith results in change of lives. This was manifested in several ways (Act 4:32-36)
 - they devoted themselves to new teaching
 - they thought differently about all their possessions
 - they became people of prayer
 - they ate and worshiped together with unified hearts. They were not just saved from sin. They were saved to Christ and to His new body called the Church

- † We are called to be a part of one another's lives. We are to learn, share, pray, and worship together. As a body of believers, God expects us to have great concern for our fellow believers and to help one another mature

God's plan for us is fulfilled by denying ourselves and surrendering to the work of the Holy Spirit

- † The Church did not start, nor did it grow, by its own power or enthusiasm. The disciples were empowered by God's Holy Spirit and plan
- † He was the promised Comforter and Guide sent after the Ascension
- † The Holy Spirit's work demonstrated that Christianity is not a religion but the Way of living according to God's will
- † We are God's people, chosen to be part of His plan to reach the world. In love and by faith, we can have the Holy Spirit's help as we courageously witness Christ to the world

Faith is the catalyst that makes the impossible possible (Act 5:22-42)

- † The early Christians were persecuted by both Jews and Gentiles; they were imprisoned, beaten, stoned, and were subject to attempts of eradication
- † However, their perseverance in face of persecution became a catalyst for the spread of Christianity; growth during times of oppression showed that Christianity was not the work of humans, but of God
- † The apostles asked Jesus Christ to increase their faith (Luk 17:5). Eventually, their faith changed the history of the world at Pentecost
- † The miracle of the two fish and five loaves of bread show that great things can happen when we place all the little that we have in Christ's hands (Mat 14:13-21). The Lord loves to do His miracles through
 - People whom the world might consider small or insignificant
 - Trivial tasks in our daily life

Pope Benedict XVI on greeting supreme patriarch and Catholicos of all Armenians

- † The Holy Spirit, then, is presented as the power of the
 1. forgiveness of sins
 2. renewal of our hearts and of our existence
- † And in this way renews the earth and creates unity where there was division
- † Afterward, at the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is shown through other signs
 1. an impetuous wind
 2. tongues of fire
 3. the apostles speaking all languages
- † This last one is a sign that the Spirit, Who is charity and Who fosters unity in diversity, has overcome the Babylonian Diaspora (Gen 11:1-9), fruit of the pride that separates men

- ✝ From the first moment of its existence the Church has been speaking all languages, thanks to the power of the Holy Spirit and the tongues of fire, and has been living in all cultures. It does not destroy the gifts or the history of a culture, rather it assumes them all in a great new unity, which reconciles unity with the multiplicity of forms

Bibliography

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2. *NKJV, Know The Word Study Bible, Gain a greater understanding of the Bible book by book, verse by verse, or topic by topic* (copyright Thomas Nelson, 1982) Kindle Edition, 2016
3. *The Orthodox Study Bible: Ancient Christianity Speaks to Today's World* (For the Old Testament text copyright of St Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology, 2008 and for the New Testament text the NKJV, copyright Thomas Nelson, 1982), Kindle Edition, 2008
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Legend

 Refers to mandatory readings

Verse to memorize

'But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God' Acts 5:39

During the coming week, let us pray expectantly

1. seeking the Lord's will to be done in Lebanon
2. for CrossTalk to find a locale
3. to become more of saints and less of sinners
4. to seek the Lord in every word I say, every act I do and every thought I think
5. to help in building His Kingdom by building His Church on earth
6. to thank Him for creating us and each one around us, on His image and likeness, and choosing us to reveal His splendor
7. to all the sick
8. to all those in prison
9. to the unity of the Christians
10. to one another to be honest and not lack integrity
11. to put all that we have in the Lord's hands trusting His management
12. to all the Christians who are being persecuted, and to those who are persecuting them
13. to all families, that the Lord unites the parents together in His Name and stops all fights

14. to the situation in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and the whole region

During this coming week, we will lift the Greek Catholic Church in prayer

قانون الايمان
أؤمن بالله واحد
أب ضابط الكل
خالق السماء والأرض
كل ما يرى وما لا يرى
وبرب واحد يسوع المسيح
ابن الله الوحيد
المولود من الأب قبل كل الدهور
نور من نور، إله حق من إله حق
مولود غير مخلوق
مساو للأب في الجوهر
الذي به كان كل شيء
الذي من أجلنا نحن البشر ومن أجل خلاصنا
نزل من السماء
وتجسد من الروح القدس ومن مريم العذراء
وتأنس
وصلب عنا على عهد بيلاطس البنطي
وتألم وفبر
وقام في اليوم الثالث كما في الكتب
وصعد إلى السماء
وجلس عن يمين الأب
وأيضا يأتي بمجد عظيم
ليدين الأحياء والأموات
الذي لا فناء لمملكه
وبالروح القدس
الرب المحيي
المنبثق من الأب
الذي هو مع الأب والابن
مسجود له وممجّد
الناطق بالأنبياء
وبكنيسة واحدة، جامعة، مقدسة، رسولية
وأعترف بمعمودية واحدة لمغفرة الخطايا
وأترجى قيامة الموتى والحياة في الدهر الآتي
أمين