

PENTECOST

We read about the Israelites' first celebration of the Paschal Feast in the book of Exodus, Chapter 12 , 21-23. God told them: "You shall observe this rite as a perpetual ordinance for you and for your children (V.24). In course of time, the Israelites left Egypt by God's help led by Moses and crossed the Red Sea; they came to the foot of Mount Sinai where God revealed himself to Moses through whom **God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. This was on the fiftieth day of crossing the Red Sea.** Passing of the Red Sea is a sign of Israelites' leaving the sin of Egypt (Unbelief, idol worship and Godless living); and making them walk through the desert in God's presence (a cloud during day and a pillar of light at night; giving them water from the rock and bread, Manna from heaven). The crossing of the Red Sea can be even compared to the baptism "which now saves us – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (cfr. 1 Pet. 3.21).

✘ Through the Prophet Ezekiel God said : **"I will put my spirit within you, and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my ordinances"** (cfr Ezk 36, 27). **Through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the disciples in the Upper Room on the Pentecost day this prophecy was fulfilled.** Three years of Jesus' teachings and prophecies of His Passion, Death and Resurrection, which the disciples directly received from Jesus, were just 'going over their head'. But with the coming of the Holy Spirit, it was written in their hearts. That is why Jesus said: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you, but if I go, I will send him to you" (Jn. 16.7). Jesus knew how essential it was for his disciples that they receive the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost – J. I. Mildorfer (Source WGoA)

Jesus is the true Paschal Lamb and the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb by the Israelites was only a sign of Jesus' death on the cross. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has delivered the humanity from the 'sin of the Red Sea'. Jesus ascended to heaven on the fortieth day after His resurrection. Thereafter Mother Mary, Apostles and the disciples were praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit, as commanded by the Lord. (cfr. Lk. 24,49). Jesus sent His own Spirit from the Father, the Holy Spirit who was living in Him and working through Him in his earthly days. Jesus wanted this Spirit to be also in his disciples so that they would become the Body of Christ in whom the very Spirit can work till the end of time to transform them into His likeness. We need to be internally disposed (cfr. Jn 14,15-16; Acts 2,38; 3,19-20) and pray for fresh repletion of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Weeks – the harvest feast- mentioned in Leviticus 23,15-16. God was preparing the world at large and the Israelites in particular, to produce the fruits of holiness. And therefore **Pentecost is the fulfilment of this desire when the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of holiness came upon the believing community and bequeathed it with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.** Therefore the Church through the celebration of the feast of Pentecost is helping us to go back to this time when God gave the Spirit of Christ to his disciples – to each member of the Church. Through the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the community of believers became the Body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit. Let us become more aware of this dignity and mission as we participate in the Liturgical celebration on the Feast of Pentecost. We allow the Holy Spirit to work through us so that the fruits, gifts and charisms may be revealed in us, as it was fully present in Jesus. Jesus has said: **Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father”** (Jn. 14,12).

St. James says: "The farmer waits for the precious crop until it receives the early and the late rains" (5,7). The late rains are much more beneficial for the crop. Let us not be satisfied with the 'rain of His Spirit' which we have already received, but eagerly look for and work for the late rains of the Holy Spirit in our personal lives, in our families, in our communities, and within the whole Church.

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