

# 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.

Fr. JMK

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## **The Trust in God overcomes all anxieties**

**"Do not let your hearts be  
troubled. Believe in God, believe  
also in me" (Jn.14.1)**

During His public ministry, Jesus had foretold the disciples about His Passion, Death and Resurrection. When "Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and to go to the Father" (Jn. 13.1), He was moved in spirit with much concern for his disciples and He comforted them by telling them: **"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me"**. He assures them that He will come back to take them to Himself. **"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places...If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."** (Jn. 14.2, 3).

“Anxiety weighs down the human heart” (Prov. 12, 25). So our loving Lord does not want us to be worried or anxious about anything. (cfr. Phil.4.6). When the disciples confronted the stormy sea they were frightened, but the Lord challenged them not to fear, but to believe in Him. He is always with us, in all our life situations, to comfort us and to strengthen us.



*Peter walking on the water*

– A. Allori (Source WGoA)

Many people are afraid of death. Death is something we all must face. No amount of medical and technological improvement, diet control or meditation techniques can avoid death. Fear of death is mainly because we are uncertain of our life after death. Mankind is created to have eternal life with God. Death is only a gateway for that eternal life. *But at the same time we should know that God has created us with freedom of choice.* He does not want us to be puppets in His hands. He loves us and respects our freedom. **If, in my earthly life, I choose to love God and live His Word, I am guaranteed of my eternal life with Him.** When we live in good relationship with the living

God, we can joyfully and peacefully accept death, because we are going to see Him face to face, whom we loved in this life. **“Beloved, we are God’s children now; what we will be, has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is”** (1 Jn. 3.2). Like St. Paul, let us desire to be united with the Lord in life and in death. **“For me living is Christ and dying is gain”** (Phil. 1.21) . St. Padre Pio used to pray every day after receiving Holy Communion: **“Stay with me, Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to You”**.

For a Christian, there is no room for fear or anxiety about death. Jesus has promised His peace to us. All that we need to do is to put our trust in Jesus and in His promises. God is with us even when we are facing death. Death is not the end but the beginning of a victorious life with God. As John Milton writes: **“Death is the golden key that opens the palace of eternity for those who put their trust in Christ”**. Let us pray for those who have a fear of death that they may heed to the Lord’s loving invitation to put their trust in Him. Through the beautiful celebration of Paschal Mysteries year after year, we go deep in our conviction that **‘our life is hidden with Christ in God, and hence we need to set our minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth’**(cfr.Col.3.2).

For those who are attached to the things of this world, engrossed so much with the *‘worldly affairs’* , the reality of death can be a *‘nightmare’*! **Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, let us press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus”** (Phil.3.13). **“What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”** (1 Cor.2.9).

Nowadays many people panic about the end of the world. Should the thought about the end of the world take away our peace?

Jesus has given us the warning messages about the end of the world; it is for us not to get anxious or worried, but to ***prepare ourselves and lead our lives in an adequate way so that to meet the Lord when 'the end' comes***, whether 'the end' be at the time of my death or at the end of the world. (See also the articles on 'the Signs of the End of the Age' and 'The Last Judgement' in our web page 'Gospel').

Since this life is passing away, as '**our citizenship is in heaven**' (Phil.3.20), *let us be only preoccupied with fulfilling our duty. "Fear God and keep His commandments: for that is the whole duty of everyone"* (Eccl.12.13). Live each day enjoying the friendship and favour of the Lord. Thus our joyful and peaceful lives (even when the 'warning signs of the end of the world' is taking place around us), be a testimony for others. **"We wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.** (1 Thess.1.10).

**"The righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever. They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord. Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid"** (Ps. 111.6-8). Yes, there is great reward for those who love the Lord and who walk in His ways. Let us not be anxious about the future, for our future is safe in the hands of the Lord. We only need to **'trust in the Lord, and do good; so we will live in the land, and enjoy security.'** (Ps.37.3).

In **my early youth** God led me to make the decision to decide for the vocation of single life to work for His Kingdom with 'unhindered devotion to the Lord' (cfr 1.Cor. 7.35). Many of my relatives and friends were 'anxious' about my future. I remember one Religious Sister telling me: "You may think Single life is good; now you are young, healthy and have a job. But when you become old or sick you will find it difficult. If you become a Religious Sister, there will be other Sisters in the community to help you. Or if you get

married your husband or children will be at your help. To lead a Single life will be a risk in the long run”.

The good Holy Spirit in me, immediately reminded me of one verse and I responded to the Sister in the words of the Psalmist; The Lord in whom I have put my trust right from my childhood **“will not cast me off in the time of old age; He will not forsake me when my strength is spent”** (Ps.71.9). I said this about 30 years back and now I have become old and fallen sick at times, but the Lord has been so faithful to His promise all throughout my life. The more we put our trust in the Lord and claim His promises, the more blessed our lives will become.

**“Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name, give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness”**  
(Ps.115.1)

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