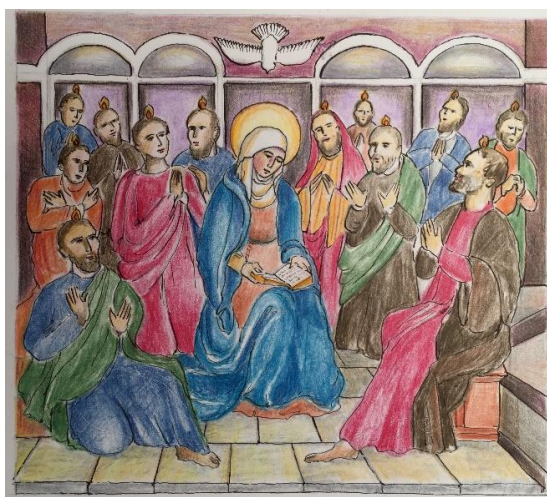


HOMILY FOR THE FEAST OF PENTECOST



Drawing by Moya Hogarth

After Fifteenth century Italian artist- Ambrosius Benson

***“Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
And Kindle in them the fire love”***

The Feast of Pentecost ranks among the most important in the Christian Calendar - it is up there with Christmas and Easter, marking a crucial moment in the history of our salvation.

As we have just heard read to us, on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles and they were inspired to leave their place of refuge and go out into the street to proclaim the Gospel in the languages of all their listeners.

This great outpouring of the Holy Spirit was not a one-off event-it is something that continues in the Church right up to the present day. The Lord himself said: I will not leave you orphans (John 14:18) And neither has he. The Holy Spirit has been sent down on the community of believers and he inspires and sustains the Church through all the ages.

This great Feast of Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the Church. Peter explains this event as the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel: *I will pour out my spirit* (Acts 2:7). Peter is filled with the Holy Spirit so that he can speak to the people about Jesus, the Son of God (Acts 4:8). Paul too is filled with the Holy Spirit before dedicating himself to his apostolic ministry (Acts 9:17), as is Stephen when he is Chosen for the ministry of service and later on for the witness of blood (Acts 7:55). It is the consolation of the Holy Spirit that the Church increases. But it marks much more than merely the birth of an institution. What is happening is that we are being gradually drawn into the life of the Trinity- the life of God himself.

We now live the life of the Holy Spirit. We are being drawn ever closer to the Father and when we die we shall rise to glory and see God face to face.

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Each one of us experiences his or her own Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is given to us at our Baptism and poured out on us afresh in the Sacrament of Confirmation, but the Spirit does not stop there. We experience many other moments of grace- because God never ceases to act in our lives. Nothing occurs by chance and while he always respects our free will, God constantly cares for us and guides us in the way he chooses. Simply sit down and count your blessings and you will soon see what He has been doing for you.

Jesus breathed on the apostles and said Receive the Holy Spirit. It is breath that gives life and the Holy Spirit certainly gives us life. We begin to live a new life; we have a new breath in us - the breath of God. We live this new life by doing the things God wants us to do, thinking the thoughts God wants us to think and by speaking the words that God wants us to speak.

Father Joseph Donkor