

## 25 THOUGHTS FROM THE HERMITAGE

### CORONA 25

*(There are 2 addenda which can be used or easily separated if wished)*

*I had at first called this 'the Octave' before Pentecost:*

*I believe that it is more correctly 'The Novena' (9 days)*

*In the old days the 'Octave' was the week after Pentecost. But it was never completed because Trinity Sunday came on the last day.*

### THE NOVENA BEFORE PENTECOST

Forty days from Easter to Ascension: the Novena before Ascension and Pentecost. Between Easter and Pentecost there have 50 days: 7 x 7 days = 49 + the Feast. In Biblical writings 7 is a powerful number and 7x7 especially sacred and powerful. 50 has completion. Pentecost completes the Feast of Easter and the cycle of Salvation.

After the Ascension the apostles and disciples stayed in the Upper Room stayed and prayed, as Jesus commanded each day until Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came. Mystified, somewhat at a lost, about 120 of them praying, and Mary the Mother of Jesus was with them (as when Jesus at the Cross asked John to look after her. They could have had no idea of what would befall—and when the Holy Spirit came it was beyond their expectation. We too are mystified at present and somewhat at loss because of a new and dangerous situation. Therefore it is especially appropriate in the same way to spend the Novena between Ascension and Pentecost by praying for the renewal of the Holy Spirit into our Community and life. How we do it for each of us? We could may pray for the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help us to cope with the difficult times in which we are living.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit: traditionally we talk of the seven gifts Here is a possible way to help how these gifts may help:

1. KNOWLEDGE: knowing something
2. UNDERSTANDING: finding what the knowledge means
3. WISDOM: how to use the knowledge and understanding that we have
4. RIGHT JUDGEMENT: how to get things right
5. COURAGE: able to stand and live by what we believe, come what may.
6. REVERENCE: having the right relationship with God.
7. PIETY: bring true to oneself as God wishes us truly to be.

There for any other gifts for which we may ask, e.g. inner peace.

Then we could well pray to receive the 'fruits' of the Spirit. 'Fruit' comes from the Latin work which means 'enjoy': this means to live to the full in God as He wishes us to be 'The glory of God is a human being fully alive' (Ireneus)

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*(addendum: during this week we shall celebrate two Feasts for England)*

St. Bede the Venerable (25<sup>th</sup>) 672/3-735. Most of this life was spent in the monastery either at Monkwearmouth or at Jarrow. He did visit at times, but is most famous for his learning, his Ecclesiastic History of the English people and his translation of the Gospel of St. John, which he finished on his deathbed. He lived through a plague in his youth (686). He is the only English Doctor of the Church.

St. Augustine of Canterbury (27<sup>th</sup>) considered to be 'apostle to the English. He was sent in 597 by Pope St. Gregory the Great to evangelize the English. There was, of course, by this time Christianity was flourishing in the north of England: Augustine (somewhat reluctantly at first) with his monks to the south, to Kent. When he received a fulsome reception by King Ethelbert in Canterbury. There is founded a monastic community and proclaimed the Gospel in the south. The first Archbishop of Canterbury, he is one of the principal patrons of the English Benedictine Congregation.

So two Benedictine monks, very different in their ministry and faithful to their monastic calling, are set before us in this week wherein we seek the help of the Holy Spirit.