

## THOUGHTS FROM THE HERMITAGE

### CORONA 26

#### PENTECOST: THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH

The Feast of Pentecost is the final celebration of our Easter pilgrimage (nay, indeed, that of the pilgrimage from Ash Wednesday until Pentecost). The triumph of Easter Sunday led to the 40 days to the Ascension: then during the Novena they waited and prayed as Jesus told them until the Holy Spirit inspired them on the 7x7 + 1 day of Pentecost. At that point the apostles and disciples were empowered to proclaim the Kingdom of Christ, of God.

This celebration reflects and completes the celebrations of the Old Testament. The Jewish celebrated at Passover celebrated the exile from Egypt. Thereafter they had 'The Feast of weeks' and these ended with the 'last day of the Feast, the great day.' (John 7/37). These days were in which the Jews not only celebrated their freedom from slavery but also gave blessing for the harvest. (The Feast is normally kept in May or June). Pentecost completed the celebrations started at Passover.

Thus the mystery of our Salvation not only travelled the road from Calvary to Bethany thence to the Upper Room at Pentecost, but also proclaimed that the old Covenant is over, was over on Calvary, and the new established at Pentecost. The fulfilment of the old is achieved in the new.

This is the new covenant of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and the new community. (It is always worth reminding that Jesus did not come to found 'an institution' but a community.) The first 'fire' of that community is given by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God, the Spirit of Jesus (still with us) and called 'the comforter', 'the counsellor', 'the inspired', peacemaker, the healer, the one who anoints, our advocate. The Spirit is often spoken as 'the creative power of God'. In the very start of Genesis, 'the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters' (Genesis 1/2). This is which gave 'life' to the waters and which gives us our life in God at our Baptism. The Three Persons of the Trinity create, and the Trinity are pro-active love.' While we may be in awe of the Spirit, we need to remember that He is the energizes our lives and ministry; the very breath of God inspiring our whole life and being. And this is how the Spirit energized the apostles on the Feast of Pentecost. On the feast this year, let God's Holy Spirit inspire our lives that we can proclaim Jesus as the Lord who has achieved salvation for everybody. Let the Spirit give each of us our special gifts by which we be Christ's apostles.

The fruits of the Spirit? Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, mildness, patience, faith, modesty, self-control. chastity. These are traditionally as considered the results of the Spirit which reaches into our hearts. When we see these qualities in the centre of those whom we meet, we shall see Christ in them. Let us pray this Pentecost that the Holy Spirit will give each of us whatever gifts we need so that we can pour from our hearts the fruits of the Spirit to those around us. 'Come, Holy Spirit, come and pour your love into our hearts'.

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### The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth: Feast 31<sup>st</sup> May

Our traditional Catholic year bring Mary into focus in May, but this year the Visitation to Elizabeth—is lost to Pentecost. And yet ‘Mary the mother of Jesus was there’ with the others to receive Jesus’ Spirit. Mary was carrying out Jesus’ last wishes on the Cross—to look after us. The Visitation has always been my favorite Mystery of the Rosary. Many of the others are marvellous but not easy to imitate directly: this Mystery really gives us a workable example: practical charity. Mary received and accepted the clarion call from the Gabriel. But she did not sit down and await the Nativity: she has heard that her cousin Elizabeth was to receive in old age a child. This would be hard for her and she would need help. Mary did not say. ‘Oh, well, I’d better not risk a journey in my state-’ etc..... She saw the need: she went immediately to the hill country, and there she helped her cousin—and the result was the proclamation of Jesus from John the Baptist in Elizabeth’s womb. Let us likewise show practical charity.

*(a true story to end: Just So Story No. 63)*

*‘The cat’s whiskers’ or ‘How the cat received the Holy Spirit’*

*In one of the cathedrals in Austria (Salzburg I believe), there is a delightful tradition that on Pentecost Sunday a white dove flutters down from the rafters during the Acts of the Apostles. The dove represents the Holy Spirit and peace. However, one year at the appointed time the hatch was opened, and the congregated and waited, and waited, and waited..... Finally over the hatch came a grimy and dishevelled sacristan, who told them all: ‘there’s no Holy Spirit this year—the cat’s eaten it.’*