

Pentecost

The Coming of the Holy Ghost

*“The Advocate, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,
He will teach you all things” (John, 14:26)*

Today the Catholic Church commemorates the dramatic and important event of the first Pentecost, almost two thousand years ago, when the Holy Ghost descended on the Blessed Virgin Mary and the disciples assembled in prayer in Jerusalem, on the tenth day after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven.

The Holy Ghost is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Spirit of Love. While all the activities of the divinity in the world are actually performed by all three Persons, we ascribe or appropriate certain works to one particular Person. Hence, works of love, such as the enlightenment and the sanctification of human souls, we attribute to the Holy Ghost. For the same reason we attribute to the Holy Ghost the indwelling of God in the Church, which is a work of love. On the first Pentecost the Holy Ghost became the very soul of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church. And just as the human soul gives to the body strength and vigour, so the Holy Ghost gives to the Catholic Church the power and the stability it needs to combat all hostile forces and to continue until the end of time its work of bringing souls to eternal salvation.

Sometimes people wonder why the Catholic Church is so vigorous, despite the many difficulties and persecutions it encounters. The answer is not to be sought in any natural source. If the Church had relied on merely natural means of preserving and protecting itself, it would have perished centuries ago. The life of the Church is divine, because it is conferred directly by God Himself. That is the reason why the Church can never perish.

The Holy Ghost dwells also in the souls of individual Catholics, giving them the spiritual strength they need for the battle of life, and enlightening them to know God's holy will. However, they will merit this help and guidance only by exercising staunch loyalty to Christ and to His Church. Only if they are members of the Church in the fullest sense can they expect to share in its supernatural life in full measure. Only those Catholics who habitually live in sanctifying grace and frequently receive the sacraments can hope to derive from their membership in the Church the aid of the Holy Ghost in the degree in which Christ willed we should partake of the supernatural benefits of the Advocate whom He sent on the first Pentecost.

Practical Application

Thank God for His protection over the Catholic Church and rejoice today in the birthday of the Church. Promise that you will so live your Catholic life that your soul will ever be worthy to be the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost.