

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend, we celebrate Pentecost, the Birthday of the Church. When the Holy Spirit came down on the Disciples, they were then empowered with the very power and authority of Jesus to go and spread the Gospel. Here is the beginning of the Church. Remember that the Church is not simply an institution or an organization – the Bible tells us that she is the Bride of Christ, the Body of Christ. This is a mystical reality – that by our Baptism, *we share in the very life of God!* We would be just an organization of people of the same thought process and belief (like any other organization), but for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Ignatios of Latakia (one of the fathers of the Second Vatican Council) wrote this about the Holy Spirit:

Without the Holy Spirit,

**God is far away
Christ stays in the past,
the Gospel is a dead letter,
the church is simply an organization,
authority a matter of domination,
mission a matter of propaganda,
the liturgy no more than an evocation,
Christian living a slave morality.**

But in the Holy Spirit:

**the cosmos is resurrected and groans with the birth-pangs of the kingdom,
the risen Christ is here,
the Gospel is the power of life,
the church shows forth the life of the Trinity,
authority is liberating service,
mission is Pentecost,
the liturgy is both memorial and anticipation,
human action is deified.** (Quoted in *The Catholic Church at the End of an Age: What Is the*

Spirit Saying? By Ralph Martin)

Notice the interplay between each part without the Holy Spirit and with the Holy Spirit. They directly correspond to each other. It is the Holy Spirit that animates the Church, which makes the Gospel the “power of life” instead of a “dead letter”. It is in the Holy Spirit that the Church “shows forth the life of the Trinity”.

We are all in need of more of the Holy Spirit moving in our lives. He is the One who makes our Faith real and alive in our hearts. Yes, we have been given the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation. He is poured into us every time we receive Communion and Reconciliation. However, having the Holy Spirit in us does not mean that we have allowed Him to be active. (Notice that I use the word “Him” and not “it” to refer to the Holy Spirit – He is a person, a Divine Person – and we are to be in relationship with Him, not simply to think of Him as a “thing,” like a dove or tongues of fire.) We need to “stir into flame” (II Timothy 1:6) the Holy Spirit in our lives.

So how do we do this? One way is to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in us. This can be as simple as praying “Come, Holy Spirit.” I have taken up the practice of praying that ten times in a row at various points in the day. Another way is to ask the Holy Spirit to “activate” the gifts He has given you. You have already been given the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but they may be lying dormant – ask Him to activate them. Another way is actively to seek the Holy Spirit in your life – seek the ways that He already working in your life, and pay attention to that.

On this Pentecost, let’s beg the Holy Spirit that we may live *supernatural life* that He has given to us! Let us stir into flame the gifts and power and fruit of the Holy Spirit, that we may be the life of God in the world and for the world.