



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are moving very quickly to the end of the Easter Season. For those of you who might be a bit confused by that statement, the Easter Season lasts fifty days – from Easter Sunday until the Feast of Pentecost (this year on May 31, 2020). It is refreshing to remember that while the season of Lenten sacrifice is forty days, the celebration of Easter praise is longer – fifty! Even though it may not have seemed like much of an Easter Season (no public Masses at all during Easter), it is still a time of celebration. **Jesus is risen** and has conquered death, despite the Coronavirus!

Easter ends on Pentecost, the Feast of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost Sunday, we will hear in the Acts of the Apostles of the coming of the Holy Spirit in wind and in fire. The Church is now beginning to prepare us for this celebration as our readings speak about the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that He will ask the Father to send *another Advocate* to us. Who is the first Advocate? Jesus. But now, He is going to send the Holy Spirit. Another word that you may have heard is “Paraclete.” This comes from Greek which means “to call to one’s side.” Jesus is, in essence, saying that He is sending someone who will always be with us, who will fight for us, who will draw us to the Father. The Holy Spirit is the sign that God is for us, not against us!

Often, we forget about the third Person of the Holy Trinity – the Holy Spirit. With images of fire, wind, water, a dove, among many others, He seems impersonal and un-relatable. Yet, the Holy Spirit is not an “it” but a “**He**” – a Divine Person, as God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) are Divine Persons. This means we can be in relationship with the Holy Spirit. Our faith tells us that the Holy Spirit came upon the Blessed Virgin Mary (see Luke 1:35), and she conceived Jesus in her womb. This points to the truth that Mary is the spouse of the Holy Spirit. Where Mary is the Holy Spirit is, and where the Holy Spirit is Mary is. Mary’s presence may help us to relate better with the Holy Spirit (since a mother is something we understand and to which we can relate).

We see in this work of the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit brings the presence of God from eternity into time, from transcendent to imminent, from distant to near. In essence, He draws us close to God and God close to us. As Metropolitan Ignatios of Latakia said:

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.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to come and move in our lives, drawing us into the mystery of the love of God, who is for us, not against us.