



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Next week is the great Feast of Pentecost – the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, the birthday of the Church. It is the Holy Spirit that makes the Church more than an organization of like-minded people. Remember, the Church *is the Body of Christ!* This is not mere analogy, but the truth.

When Jesus in Heaven appears to Saul on the road to Damascus, He says, “**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?**” (Acts 9:4, 22:7). Jesus doesn’t say, “Why are you persecuting my organization?” or “Why are you persecuting my followers?” Jesus says that the Church is His own Body – and that to persecute the Church is to persecute Him. This means that we are His Body – for real! (This also means that when we, as Christians, persecute the Church, complaining, disobeying the teachings of the Magisterium, etc., it is akin to cancer, which is killing the body from the inside out.) This is the power of the Holy Spirit – He unites us so much with Christ, that we are now identified with His own self!

In the first reading today, we hear of how the disciples gathered, after the Ascension of Jesus, in the Upper Room (where the Last Supper happened), and they devoted themselves to prayer. Here we see them praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. With them, St. Luke tells us, was Mary the mother of Jesus (see Acts 1:14). We can imagine in this time how Mary shared with them all the stories of Jesus’ growing up – the Annunciation, the Visitation, the coming of the Shepherds and Magi, etc..

But more than that, Mary as model disciple, as Mother of the Church, as spouse of the Holy Spirit, would have helped the Disciples to pray and to prepare their hearts for this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Mary also would have been praying, so that she could receive the graces she would need in her new role (as Mother of the Church).

With all of this, we can see how much we need Mary in our lives. She said a perfect “yes” to God at the Annunciation (and continued to say “yes” to God each day of her life). She will help us to let go of our little illusions of control so that we can say “yes” to God.

Mary is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. At the Annunciation, she was wed to the Lord and Giver of Life, and their love was fruitful, conceiving the humanity of Jesus within her womb. Now, Mary and the Holy Spirit never got divorced, so we can be assured that where she is, the Holy Spirit is, and where the Holy Spirit is, Mary is. This means that she will help us to be open to the Holy Spirit. She will help us, like the Disciples in the Upper Room, to be open to the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Mary is the Model Disciple. A disciple is not just someone who learns from a teacher, but someone who so models his life on his teacher as to become just like him. Mary became more closely united to Jesus than anyone else in the world ever has. St. Louis de Montfort says that she is the *mold of God*. He uses this image of how to make a statue. To carve or chisel take much work, much skill, and with one mistake can mar the whole statue. But if one has a perfect mold, one may pour a liquid into it and, when it solidifies, it will be a perfect statue. As Mary is the perfect mold of Jesus, she can mold us into the model of Jesus (if only our hearts are soft enough to be molded).

Let us ask Mary to pray for us that her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, will come and set our lives on fire, that we may be molded into Jesus. If we do this, when we finally have public Masses again, we will be a people truly after the Heart of God.