



Among all the mysteries of the Rosary, Pentecost differs from the others because it is the only one in which the central figure is neither Christ nor the Blessed Virgin but the Holy Spirit, even though the Blessed Virgin plays an essential role in it. Today we will meditate more specifically on the role of the Holy Spirit.

The mystery of Pentecost raises a fundamental question: Why, after completing the work of Redemption, did Our Lord insist that He had to return to the Father in order to send us the Holy Spirit? His words are truly mysterious: *"It is better for you that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you."* (Jn 16:7)

Yet He had just said to the apostles: *"And I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Mt 28:20) Here again, since Christ is with us—truly present in the Eucharist—why must He send the Holy Spirit?



To try to understand these words, we must consider the mystery of the Holy Trinity itself. Although the three divine Persons always act together, the history of salvation reveals more specifically the action of each of Them. We can thus distinguish three distinct phases. In Creation and the Old Testament, we discover more particularly the work of the Father. The second phase, very brief compared to the other two, is that of Christ. Jesus comes to fulfill all the promises of the Old Testament. He brings us His light and His teachings, accomplishes His redemptive sacrifice, and manifests His glory through His Resurrection. And He gives us a Mother: Mary.

At Pentecost, the era of the Holy Spirit begins in a special way. He had already been at work from the beginning, but His action would now manifest itself in a new way. He descends upon the nascent Church to play an essential role there. But specifically, what role? Let us humbly attempt to address this question. We know that the Church is the Mystical Body of Christ: Our Lord is its Head, and we are its members. Furthermore, Christ truly dwells on earth among us, especially in the Eucharist, where He is present with His Body, His Soul, and His Divinity. So, what is missing?

Being a member of the Mystical Body of Christ means much more than simply being near Him: it means being united to Him to the point of forming a single Body with Him and thus participating in His divine life through grace. Yet our human nature is incapable, on its own, of participating in this divine life. It is precisely for this reason that Christ sends us the Holy Spirit, who comes to dwell within us to make us capable of it. It is the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us, unites us to Christ, and gradually enables us to share in His divine life. By dwelling within each of us, the Holy Spirit unites us to one another and to Christ to form a single living Body. And it is in this way—united to Christ in the Holy Spirit—that we can come to the Father.

A great preacher of the late nineteenth century, Bishop Charles-Louis Gay, explains this beautifully:

*"The Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the Church—the Christian and Catholic spirit—is, in essence, one and the same. For not only does the Spirit sent to the Upper Room bind Jesus to the Church, but He unites Himself to this beloved Church in an inexpressibly intimate way."*

When we understand this, how can we not be left breathless, so overwhelming is this action of God within us? To what immeasurable dignity is man called! And how incomparable is the Church to everything that exists on earth!

This understanding of the Holy Spirit's role also allows us to better grasp the concept of mortal sin. Through mortal sin, we lose sanctifying grace and cease to be the living temple of the Holy Spirit. Deprived of this presence that united us to Christ, we are then cut off from His

divine life. If we die in this state, without repentance, we cannot reach the Father and will go to hell, for no one comes to the Father except through Christ, without being united to Him by grace.

Let us now consider how the Holy Spirit acts, and to do so, let us draw on the visible signs He chose to manifest Himself at Pentecost. First of all, let us note that the Holy Spirit manifests Himself not outside, but inside a house—the Upper Room. He enters under the sign of a mighty wind that fills the entire house. We can see in the Upper Room an image of the Church upon which Christ has just sent the Holy Spirit. Now, the wind can be felt but not seen. It thus manifests the invisible action of the Holy Spirit, who penetrates the entire Church, fills it, and gives it life.

Then come the tongues of fire, which rest individually upon the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles. This time, they manifest the personal action of the Holy Spirit in each member of the Church. Through Baptism, we truly become the temple of the Holy Spirit and remain so as long as we are in a state of grace. St. Paul affirms this: *“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16)*

When the Holy Spirit dwells within us, He acts in our souls. He enlightens us, strengthens us, and lifts us up to God, particularly through the action of His seven gifts.

Fire itself expresses several aspects of this action of the Holy Spirit. First, it is the fire of divine love, the charity that He pours into our hearts. It is also the fire that purifies our soul of whatever separates it from God. Finally, these flames take the form of tongues, heralding the mission that begins at Pentecost: filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles go out from the Upper Room to proclaim Christ. They thus manifest that apostolic zeal to which, following in their footsteps, all Christians are called.

This is one of the great fruits of the mystery of Pentecost: the apostolate to souls. Being a member of the Catholic Church is not merely a matter of receiving the sacraments and working toward one’s own sanctification. It also means being a missionary. And to do so, there is no need to go very far. So many people around us today lack the true faith, whether they belong to another religion or do not believe in anything at all. This is the mission that Our Lord Himself has entrusted to us: *“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19–20)*

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows us our duty to come to the aid of those who suffer earthly hardships. How much more, then, must we come to the aid of souls so that they may not suffer for all eternity! These two forms of charity are, moreover, inseparable, for they have the same source: love of neighbor.

Pentecost therefore calls us to work for the conversion of others. This is a duty, not merely an option. This apostolate can be carried out in two complementary ways: through direct action—particularly through words, dialogue, and example—but also through prayer and sacrifice.

This is precisely what the Blessed Virgin asked of us at Fatima, giving us a means of apostolate accessible every day, whatever our situation: to offer up the difficulties of our state in life for the conversion of sinners. Thus, even without meeting anyone, we can carry out a powerful apostolate through Mary by responding to her request: *“Sacrifice yourselves for sinners and often say to Jesus, especially when you make a sacrifice: ‘O Jesus, it is out of love for You, for the conversion of sinners, and in reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.’”*

Then Our Lady shows hell to the three little visionaries and tells them: *“Pray, pray a great deal, and make sacrifices for sinners, for many souls go to hell because they have no one to sacrifice and pray for them.”*

Finally, this apostolate also concerns the First Saturdays of the month. While it is very good that we practice them ourselves, we must also make known to those around us this means willed by God to obtain peace through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We must speak about them to those around us and help make them known. We must become missionaries of the First Saturdays.