

Preston, Sunday 8th June 2025

Whit Sunday

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

Today Jesus is holding his promise.

Ten days ago, He told us that He would not leave us orphans¹. Today he holds His Divine Promise and sends the Paraclete over the Apostles and Our Lady, gathered in the Cenacle, expecting the Divine Gifts in prayer and recollection.

He also made visible the Church, rendering public its divine institution. Today, is the birthday of our beloved Catholic Church, our Teacher and Mother, as the holy Pope John XXIII entitled her in his encyclical letter², released 64 years ago, on the 15th May 1961.

This Pentecost echoes the one that happened upon the Sinai, when Moses received the ten commandments and the Law. But what a difference.

“The one, on the rugged rocks of Arabia, amidst thunder and lightning, promulgates a Law, that is written on tablets of stone; the second is in Jerusalem, [...] over whom the Spirit of love is to reign. In this second Pentecost, the heavens are not overcast, nor is the roar of thunder heard; the hearts of men are not stricken with fear, as when God spoke on Sinai; repentance and gratitude, these are the sentiments which are now uppermost. A divine fire burns within their souls, and will spread throughout the whole world. Our Lord Jesus had said: ‘I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I, but that it be kindled³?’ The hour for the fulfilment of this word is come: the Spirit of Love, the Holy Ghost, the eternal uncreated Flame, is about to descend from heaven, and realise the merciful design of our Redeemer⁴.”

The birthday of our Holy Mother the Church makes all these graces of the Spirit to come over us. For most of us, today is a liturgical anniversary of our own reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. We were marked by the sign of the Cross, and confirmed by the Chrism of Salvation, to become true witnesses of Christ, obedient servants of His Divine Love and Will.

“[The Holy Ghost] who showed himself under the endearing form of a Dove, on the occasion of Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan, now appears under that of Fire. He is the Spirit of Love; and love is not only gentle and tender, it is also, ardent as fire. Now, therefore, that the world is under the influence of the Holy Ghost, it must needs be on fire, and the fire shall not be checked.

¹ Jn., 14, 18.

² John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 15th May 1961.

³ Luke, 12, 49.

⁴ Dom Guéranger, *Liturgical Year*, Feast of Pentecost.

And why this form of Tongues? To show that the heavenly fire is to be spread by the word, by speech. These hundred and twenty Disciples need but to speak of the Son of God, made Man, and our Redeemer; of the Holy Ghost, who renews our souls; of the heavenly Father, who loves and adopts us as his children; their word will find thousands to believe and welcome it. Those that receive it, shall all be united in on faith; they shall be called the Catholic Church, that is, universal, existing in all places and times. Jesus had said: ‘Go, teach all nations⁵!’ The Holy Ghost brings from heaven both the *longue* that is to teach, and the fire, (the love of God and mankind,) which is to give warmth and efficacy to the teaching. This Tongue and Fire are now given to these first Disciples, who, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, will transmit them to others: so will it be to the end of time⁶.”

Today, for the first time, the first Pope, St Peter delivers his first public speech to attract the souls of the pilgrims of Jerusalem to Jesus. He still speaks to us, 2000 years later.

“Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call⁷.”

We are these pilgrims on Earth, longing for our Home in Heaven. Moved by the blown of the Holy Ghost, let’s tend our hearts towards the immense and inextinguishable source of Charity, the Furnace of Love of the Sacred Heart, whom we are celebrating all along the month of June.

We should fly, come to Him, throwing ourselves into the arms of His tender mercy. He is our sure refuge, our unfailing and only hope. He has a remedy for all our evils, a relief for all our miseries, a reparation for all our faults; He can supply for what is wanted in us in order to obtain fully the graces that we ask for ourselves and others. He is for us all, the infallible, inexhaustible source of light, of strength, of perseverance, peace and consolation. May He have mercy on us, and on all that, we recommend to Him, according to His own mercy, and may He do with us, for us, and in us, whatsoever He will, for we must abandon ourselves to Him with the full, entire confidence and conviction that He will never abandon us either in time or eternity.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.

⁵ Matt., 28, 19.

⁶ Dom Guéranger, *Liturgical Year*, Feast of Pentecost.

⁷ Acts, 2, 38-39.