

HOMILY – PENTECOST SUNDAY – 20 MAY 2018

“Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, enkindle in them the fire of your love, send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth”.

After Christ ascended to the Father, as promised, ten days later, the world received the Holy Spirit, like tongues of fire, falling on the Apostles, disciples and friends of Christ Jesus. A fire of love, as the prayer tells us, that changes the state of humanity.

St Hilary once declared, that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the faithful, means that we “partake of the Divinity of Christ”. In other words, we now share in a Godly power that the secular, non-believing world can never obtain, destroy or acquire. We now have God as our advocate, our counsellor, our spiritual advisor.

The very proof of the reality of the Holy Spirit is there to see. If the Church did not have the Holy Spirit, then the non-believing world would not be so determined to destroy it. The presence of the Divine, the Holy, disturbs the natural power brokers, it challenges corruption and injustice, it exposes the futility of materialism and points towards a Kingdom that is not of this world. The Church is one of the last institutions in the World that is not controlled by the earthly rulers. So much so, that Vladimir Putin, leader of Russia, knows that if he rebuilds the Church, he rebuilds the will of the people. You cannot destroy the Church because its source is Divine.

As St Paul reminds us, a great saint, former villain of Christianity, teaches us (Romans) ‘If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead will give life to your perishable bodies too’.

A few days ago, I went to Malta, on pilgrimage and visited St Paul’s Bay and the catacombs, we celebrated Mass where St Paul had been shipwrecked, as a prisoner, nearly 2,000 years ago. Just think of the Spirit of God, in one man, among many, in the short time he was there. He converted the local Maltese to Christianity, to a faith that has, despite repeated attempts by Islamic forces, over the centuries, never left that island.

The invitation to all of us, is to accept the presence of the Holy Spirit, in our lives. It is like switching on a light or empowering our whole lives with the strength of God. The Sistine Chapel in Rome, shows the image, by Michelangelo, of God creating the world and giving mankind the power to overcome the natural world and be a worthy steward of creation. We can only do this truly if we live according to the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit that drives the Church on earth, like petrol drives the engine of a car, it empowers the Sacraments, it brings the Word of God alive, it opens us up to the power of prayer and calls us to holiness and love by being a community of believers. It is the Holy Spirit that expels the power of evil, reconciles enemies and breaks down the barriers of hatred between nations, hence the gift of speaking many tongues.

St Catherine of Scienna, a famous medieval mystic and reformer, wrote very beautifully of how, when we accept the Holy Spirit in our lives, brings out the best in us. She wrote, “Be what you are meant to be, in the eyes of God and you will change the world”.

So, think about it, and pray about it in your own lives, there is only one way to truly live while on earth, in total harmony with the Holy Spirit. Go beyond the doubters, the cynics, the scorners, the persecutors of the Church. Don't be enslaved anymore by the pagan, secular world. The Spirit of God has been given to us, over and over again. Don't reject that Covenant of Divine Love or it will be taken elsewhere and then, when we do die, Jesus will say, "I do not know you". Instead, let us hear Jesus say, "I called you by name, all I have is yours, you have died for love of Me, just as I died and rose, for love of you".

God Bless you all.