

Sunday 31st May 2020

Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray:

Come Holy Spirit, you are the Voice that gives us hope, life and vision. You disturb our conscience to show us where we go wrong and you put us before the choice to follow you or not. Come Holy Spirit, you inspire our souls with the life-giving words of Jesus; you guide us onto the way of love. Come Holy Spirit and change us to be the people you have created us to be. Amen

Confession

Merciful God, you made us in your image, with a mind to know you, a heart to love you and a will to serve you. But our knowledge is imperfect, our love is inconstant and our obedience is incomplete. Day by day we fail to grow in your likeness; yet you are slow to be angry with your children. For the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour, do not hold our sins against us, but in your tender love, forgive us.

(Silence)

Assurance of Pardon

The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon and remission of all your sins.

God of love, your Son gave us a new commandment, that we should love one another, even as you love us, the unworthy and the wandering. Give us a mind to forget the wrongs we suffered and a heart to love one another; through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

Amen

The Lord's prayer

At the Saviour's command and formed by His divine teaching we pray together:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

New Testament Reading:

The Acts of the Apostles 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' ¹³But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to

you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷"In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Reflection

Today we remember the event of Pentecost, when the Apostles and Mary were gathered together with many other disciples and they received the Holy Spirit in a visible manifestation of power. Suddenly, all these gathered people of different languages and cultures, were able to understand each other as if united in one common language. This was the language of God and on this Sunday, we celebrate the birth of the Christian Church. Every time the Holy Spirit gets involved, He brings about massive changes in the life of a person and makes that persons radically different. He empowers people with divine strength to bear all things and bring God's love into a guilty and selfish world. The Holy Spirit unites the people of God as He united all the people at Pentecost so much that all their languages blended into one.

It is His voice that we hear when we feel our hearts burn at the sound of the Word of God. Do not resist Him, as the world constantly does.

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will be with us for ever when we learn to love Him and obey His commandments. "This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor know Him" The world requires the impossible task to see the Spirit with the eyes of the body. But we can only see the Spirit of God with the eyes of the heart.

Jesus said that all we need to do is to keep His word and follow Him and the Spirit will dwell in us; teaching us everything and reminding us all that Jesus taught us.

This is why God comes to us, so that we can go back to Him. As I said many times before, Christianity is not about us looking for God, it's about God looking for us, his lost sheep in danger of being devoured by the dangers of a sinful world.

Today the Spirit of God is moving among us, disturbing our ways of life, recalling us to the original purpose of creation, wanting to love us in a communion of love.

This is an offer that, if understood from the heart, no one could refuse. And yet many choose to walk away; many choose to follow their selfish desires rather than trying to see what is on the other side of the fence.

All God wants is that we surrender to the gifts of the Spirit, so that we can change the world. Every time we surrender to the Holy Spirit, we enable great changes and affect human history. Think, for example, at famous saints and doctors of the Church. We too can change the world if we truly follow His will.

If God was on the radio, the interferences are the distractions of this world keeping you from developing your true spiritual potential and enjoy spiritual freedom. If God was on the internet, the low signal would be because of those distractions and "duties" that take so much of our time, preventing us to develop and grow into the spiritual beings that we were born to be. So, let the Holy Spirit take over the communications. Then the signal would be a million times more powerful than the fastest broadband.

Let the kingdom of God live within you and you will see that all those things that seemed so important before, are not fundamental even if they are necessary. God will not let you go without what is necessary if you put Him first.

Open your heart today and let the Holy Spirit empower you to act as God's servant in word and deed. Let Him speak to your heart and you will experience that living flame burning within giving you true life and purpose.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray:

Come Holy Spirit, come and renew the face of the earth. Come with your seven gifts. Come Spirit of Life, Spirit of Communion and Love. The Church and the world need you. Come Holy Spirit and make us even more fruitful than before. Give us new strength and missionary zeal to these sons and daughters of yours gathered in this virtual church today. Open their hearts, renew their Christian commitment in the world. Make them courageous messengers of the Gospel, witnesses to the risen Jesus Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour of humanity.

Amen

Benediction:

The blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you always. Amen

Rev. Bruno Boldrini