



The Holy See

VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS TO VERONA

EUCCHARISTIC CONCELEBRATION

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS

Bentegodi Stadium (Verona)

Saturday, 18 May 2024

[Multimedia]

The Apostle Paul once went to a Christian community and asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit. And what did they answer? What is the Holy Spirit? (cf. *Acts* 19:1-2). They did not know what the Holy Spirit was.

I think that if I were to ask Christian communities today, “What is the Holy Spirit?”, many of them would not know how to answer. Once, at a Mass for children — on Pentecost day like today, there were around 200 children — I asked them: “Who is the Holy Spirit?”; and the children replied: “Me! Me! Me!”. They all wanted to answer. I said: “You! It is the Paralytic. He had heard the word Paraclete, but he said paralytic. And many times, if I were to ask, I don’t mean the answer would be “paralytic”, but we don’t know who the Holy Spirit is.

Brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit is the protagonist of our lives, the one who moves us forward, who helps us progress, who enables us to develop the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is within us; pay attention, we all received the Holy Spirit at Baptism, and even more at Confirmation, but do I listen to the Holy Spirit within me? Do I listen to the Spirit that moves my heart and tells me, “Don’t do this; do this?”. Or for me, does the Holy Spirit not exist?

Today we are celebrating the feast of the day when the Holy Spirit descended [upon the Apostles].

But let us think, the Apostles were locked up in the Upper Room; they were afraid, the doors were closed... The Holy Spirit came, changed their hearts, and they went out to preach with courage, courage. The Holy Spirit gives us the courage to live the Christian life, and for this reason, with this courage, it changes our lives.

Often we go to confession with the same sins — “But Father, I would like to change my life; I don’t know how to do it”. Listen to the Spirit. Pray to the Spirit, and he will be the one to change your life, trust the Spirit. “Father, I’m 90 years old, I cannot change.” — “But how many days of life do you have left?” — “I don’t know.” — “With just one day, the Spirit can change your life, he can change your heart”. The Spirit is firstly the one who changes our lives. Do you understand this? Let’s repeat together, “The Spirit changes our lives”, all together. And this is beautiful.

Secondly, when the frightened Apostles received the Holy Spirit, they moved forward with courage to preach the Gospel. The Holy Spirit gives us the courage to live as Christians. We often see Christians who are like lukewarm water, neither hot nor cold; they lack courage. “Father, where can one take a course to get courage”? — “No: pray to the Spirit, trust the Spirit”. The Spirit gives us the courage to live as Christians. Do you understand this?

All together, “The Spirit gives us courage”. There you go, and let’s ask for this, the Spirit to help us move forward.

And then the Spirit did a very beautiful thing on that day of Pentecost. There were people of all nations, of all languages, of all cultures, and with those people, the Spirit built the Church. The Spirit built the Church. What does this mean? Does it make everyone the same? No, all different, but with one heart, with love, which unites us.

The Spirit is the one who saves us from the danger of making us all the same. No, we are all redeemed, all loved by the Father, all taught by Jesus Christ, and what does the Spirit do? He brings us together. There is a word that explains this well. The Spirit creates harmony. The harmony of the Church, each different from the other, but in a climate of harmony. Let us say it together: the Spirit creates harmony, [all together: the Spirit creates harmony].

Dear brothers and sisters, this is today’s miracle, to take frightened, cowardly men and make them courageous, to take men and women of all cultures and make them united, to build the Church, to take these people and not make them the same. What does the Spirit do? Harmony. Together: the Spirit makes harmony. Now let us each think of our own life. We all need harmony. We all need the Spirit to give us harmony in our soul, in the family, in the city, in society, in the workplace.

The opposite of harmony is war. It is fighting against each other. And when there is war, when we fight against each other, is it the Spirit doing this, yes or no? No! The Spirit creates harmony. And with the apostles the day He came, there was Mary, the Virgin Mary. Let us ask her to give us the

grace to receive the Holy Spirit, for her as a mother to teach us to receive the Holy Spirit. Thank you.

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English, Fifty-seventh year, number 21, Friday, 24 May 2024, p. 12.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana