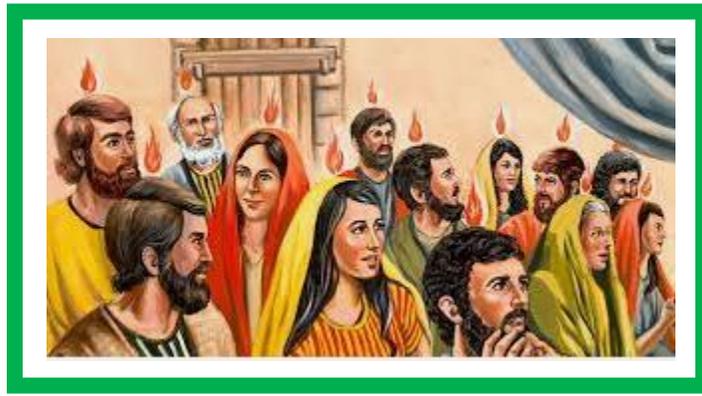


Thoughts On The Coming Of The Holy Spirit



For three years the apostles followed Jesus throughout Israel. They were specially chosen by Him. They listened to Him teach. They watched Him perform miracles. They asked Him questions. They were His closest friends and followers. They shared their lives with Him.

On Palm Sunday they watched Jesus enter in triumph into Jerusalem. They must have been filled with excitement seeing the crowds. In less than a week everything would change.

On the evening of Holy Thursday, after the Last Supper, Jesus asked them to go with Him to the Mount of Olives and “keep watch with Him.” Jesus went to pray. Holy Scripture tells us that Jesus’ prayer was so intense He sweat blood. While Jesus prayed the apostles fell asleep. When Jesus was arrested later that evening they all abandoned Him and fled. On the evening of Holy Thursday, Peter, chosen to be first among the apostles, denied even knowing Jesus. He denied Jesus not just once but three times.

On Friday afternoon after Jesus was condemned to die, He was made to carry His cross. The disciples had fled and Simon of Cyrene, a stranger, was recruited by the Romans to help Jesus carry His cross. Jesus, after His brutal beatings, was too weak to carry the cross alone.

On Friday afternoon, when Jesus was crucified, only His mother Mary, John the beloved disciple, and some of the women who accompanied Him remained with Him at the foot of the cross. The group was small enough that Holy Scripture tells us each of their names.

After Jesus’ death and burial Scripture tells us that the apostles gathered in upper room because they were afraid of the Jews.

On Sunday morning, when the women who went to anoint the body of Jesus told the apostles that the tomb was empty the apostles were still afraid. They did not understand what was happening. That evening they were in the upper room and Jesus entered the locked room. He had to tell them Shalom, do not be afraid. They saw Him physically present in their midst and they still did not understand. The next Sunday Thomas is present and Jesus appears again. And still they did not understand. Jesus stayed with the apostles for forty days and still they did not understand.

On Ascension Thursday Jesus took the apostles to the Mount of Olives. He told them to pray for the coming of the Spirit and He ascended into heaven. The apostles returned to Jerusalem and prayed as Jesus directed.

Ten days after Ascension, on Pentecost, EVERYTHING CHANGED! The Spirit came upon them manifested as tongues of fire and filled their souls. These frightened men are filled with courage and knowledge. They no longer fear the Jews or anyone else. These humble laborers and fishermen understand everything Jesus taught them. They will go on to write the New Testament and spread the Gospel throughout the known world. They were so filled with courage and wisdom that they happily gave their lives as they spread the Good News.

This very same Spirit who transformed them is the Spirit that EACH OF US received in Baptism and Holy Chrismation. Each of us has received this gift and must be open to it, pray to be filled with the Spirit and follow Him where He leads us. We won’t see visions or experience miracles, but if we pray sincerely and listen, we will hear the whisper of the Spirit and see Him alive in our lives.

He leads us in the way of truth and goodness. The more we allow Him to work in us the more we will be filled with His grace.

We see the Holy Spirit at work in the world today. We ask you to go on-line and find more information on these heroes of the faith.

- Carlos Acutis was born in 1991 and died in 2006. He was beatified in October 2020. He was an Italian Catholic born in England and loved computer programming, Playstation and Video Games. His friends considered him a computer geek. From his earliest days until his death, he had great compassion for the poor, the disabled and victims of bullying. He was a popular young man and encouraged his friends to always be kind to the less fortunate. He led by example. He had deep devotion to the Eucharist. He died of Leukemia at age 15. He is an example of a modern young person open to the Holy Spirit.
- Father Solanus Casey was born in 1870 on a farm in Wisconsin. He died in 1957 in Detroit. He was a Capuchin Franciscan Priest in Detroit. He answered the door at the monastery and ran the soup kitchen. Father Casey struggled academically in the seminary and was ordained a “simplex priest” meaning he could celebrate Mass but could not preach doctrinal sermons or hear confessions. He helped establish the soup kitchen in 1929 to feed people during the depression, a work that continues today. Father Casey led a life of humble devotion, openness to the Spirit and great charity. Through his devotion to the poor and disabled, he brought thousands of people to the church. He often urged people when they asked God for blessings to thank Him “ahead of time” for the blessings they were yet to receive. He was beatified in 2016.

- St. Theresa of Calcutta was born in 1910 in Northern Macedonia and died in 1997 in India. She joined the Sisters of Loreto in 1928. In 1946 she heard an inner call to serve the poor in India. She left her religious order to start the Missionaries of Charity.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is a gift. It is ours to accept or reject. To accept the Spirit is to be brought into eternal union with the Trinity. Pentecost is the Feast of the Holy Spirit.