

FROM THE FATHERS

From the treatise "Against the Heresies" by St Irenaeus (130-202)

When the Lord told his disciples to go and teach all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he conferred on them the power of giving men new life in God.

Luke says that the Spirit came down on the disciples at Pentecost, after the Lord's ascension, with power to open the gates of life to all nations and to make known to them the new covenant. So it was that men of every language joined in singing one song of praise to God, and scattered tribes, restored to unity by the Spirit, were offered to the Father as the first-fruits of all the nations.

This was why the Lord had promised to send the Advocate: he was to prepare us as an offering to God. Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough, one loaf of bread, without moisture, we who are many could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we who were once like a waterless tree could never have lived and borne fruit without this abundant rainfall from above. Through the baptism that liberates us from change and decay we have become one in body; through the Spirit we have become one in soul.

23rd May
2021

Pentecost

THE LORD AND GIVER OF LIFE



The Church comes into existence in and through the Paschal Mystery; in the death and resurrection of the Lord his Church is born. However, it is at Pentecost that she receives in immeasurable abundance the fuel she needs to undertake her work, and to perfect her life. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of God the Holy Trinity. He is, as the Creed teaches us, 'the Lord' (i.e. God) and 'the giver of Life.' He is the love that spirates forth from the Father who eternally beholds the Son in love, and from the Son who eternally beholds the Father in love. The life-giving heat and fire of the Holy Spirit is given to the Church at Pentecost so that we might participate fully in that Trinitarian life, in God's inner life of love. That is why such dynamic power is given on the Day of Pentecost to the Twelve gathered around the Mother of God. They receive the energy and outward orientation the Church needs if the Saviour's urgent command to continue his reconciling work is to be fulfilled. They are given the power of proclamation. And what is the Church's proclamation – *our* proclamation? Nothing less than the full-throated announcement that Christ, who died and is risen to die no more, has drawn the whole created order into alignment with God. The gift of such perfect alignment can only be found, received, and lived-out in Christ's Church, his Mystical Body. New Life is to be found only there, in a Body which is forever animated, directed, infused, and quickened by God the Holy Spirit.

A HYMN TO GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

Holy Spirit, ever dwelling in the holiest realms of light
Holy Spirit ever brooding o'er a world of gloom and night;
Holy Spirit, ever raising Sons of earth to thrones on high;
Living, life-imparting Spirit, thee we praise and magnify.

Holy Spirit, ever living as the Church's very life;
Holy Spirit, ever striving through her in a ceaseless strife;
Holy Spirit, ever forming in the Church the mind of Christ;
Thee we praise with endless worship for thy fruit and gifts
unpriced.

Holy Spirit, ever working through the Church's ministry;
Quick'ning, strenght'ning, and absolving, setting captive sinners
free;
Holy Spirit, ever binding age to age and soul to soul;
In a fellowship unending, thee we worship and extol.

Bishop Timothy Rees (1874-1939)