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## PENTECOST

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU  
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault  
(Fontgombault, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024)

*Non relinquam vos orphanos.*  
I will not leave you orphans.  
(*Jn 14:18*)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
My dearly beloved Sons,

**T**HROUGH THE PASCHAL MYSTERY, through His death and resurrection, Christ has carried out His Passover. From now on, the Word of God remains in His human nature near the throne of His Father in eternity. The same doesn't apply to us. Our own passover, our passage from this world to the Father, is the fruit of a long gestation, the fruit of a whole life. How, and with whom, is this birth to be carried out?

One of the significant features of our times is individualism. Yet, we are assured of it, man doesn't come from nowhere to go nowhere. Every man is accompanied on his Paschal path. The Lord has assured it: "I will not leave you orphans."<sup>a</sup> This promise made to the disciples will be realised during the apparitions of the Risen Lord. Yet, the perspective is broader. A few verses after this one, the Lord adds: "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."<sup>b</sup> The reading taken from the Acts of the Apostles has just reminded us of this coming of the Spirit upon the disciples.

*a. Jn 14:18.*

*b. Jn 14:26.*

The disciples have been gathered in a same place, and that since the Ascension. What are they doing? “All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.”<sup>a</sup>

a. *Acts* 1:14.

Whereas they have just received the mission to bear the Gospel unto the ends of the earth, the apostles, far from scheduling their first apostolic journeys, are praying. The adverb *unanimiter*, “with one heart, with one mind,” conveys the atmosphere of these seminal moments. Hour after hour, the apostles realise that they haven’t so much received the mission to build up the Church, as that of accompanying her in a growth that will depend on the Master of the harvest only. However, for this accompaniment to be successful, it entails the unity of the members of the body. This gift, a divine gift, can be obtained through prayer only.

This enables us to draw a lesson. Rather than bitterly noticing the loss of influence of the Church in a dechristianised West, wouldn’t it be better to start praying, and work at the unity of a body that today is scattered? We beg for this unity for the Church as we address the Father at the beginning of the Roman Canon: “May it please Thee to grant her peace, to guard, unite, and govern her throughout the whole world.”

The peace coming from this *Ecclesiola* — this little apostolic Church — bears witness to a unity that is not merely local or for show. No indeed, we are talking here of a unity in faith. Whereas doubt had scattered the disciples on Good Friday evening, faith in the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit unites them, and it will soon be confirmed and developed by the divine Guest.

Even today, the faith received from the apostles and transmitted in Scripture and Tradition is the deposit which we must receive and which unites us, according to St. Paul’s exhortation to the Ephesians:

With all humility and meekness, with patience, support one another in charity. Be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is above all and through all and in all.<sup>b</sup>

b. *Eph* 4:2-6.

Let us come back to the Upper Room, where everything seems to be prepared for the accomplishment of the promise. St. Luke tells us the scene, and emphasises the contrast between the group of the apostles, devoting themselves to prayer, sitting in a recollected way, and the violent event that takes place: suddenly, a sound coming from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind fills all the house. This wind sweeps away doubts, and whatever darkness that might have been lingering in the hearts of some of the disciples. Moreover, this wind opens up the hearts. These have now been cleared, and may become vessels for the Holy Spirit, and hence authentic witnesses of the Gospel, lamps lit up before the world. In the unity of prayer, the disciples contemplate the apparition of the tongues of fire, parting and resting upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave utterance to each. <sup>a</sup>

a. Acts 2:5.

The effect is immediate, and it is not the same in all of them: “As the Spirit gave utterance to each.”

Let us note that it is the noise like the rush of a mighty wind that convokes the crowd near the apostles. In all these men coming from the ends of the earth, from a thousand places and for a thousand reasons, this wind had also swept clean their hearts, which were now disposed to receive the seed of the Gospel.

The apostles may speak. The crowd hears them. The miracle takes place. It is duly recorded and told by St. Luke, and it is twofold. The gathered men hear the apostles, each in his own tongue. They hear them proclaim the mighty deeds of God, *magnalia Dei*. This Latin word, as well as the corresponding Greek word *μεγαλεία*, evokes amazing things, which are astounding by their magnitude.

On this Pentecost morning, at the beginning of this beloved octave, let us open the windows, and perhaps even the shutters, of our souls to the wind of the Spirit. Let us implore His coming, and receive His presence. The graces we received in the sacrament of confirmation turned us into accomplished Christians. Yet, sacramental fecundity depends on our own charity. The French writer Léon Bloy affirmed,

“There is but one sorrow, namely not being saints.”

As a conclusion, let us notice an astonishing oversight of St. Luke. He hasn't mentioned Mary. She was very likely attending the scene. The day of the Annunciation she had so often pondered on, the day on which the Spirit had overshadowed her and on which she had conceived the Word of God, came back to her mind. What a joy for her, as the Word of God was born in the hearts of these persons, to see that the first fruits of her *Fiat*, the early outline of the Church, whose Mother she was some day to be proclaimed, were blossoming before her.

The words of the *Magnificat* kept resounding in her heart:

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. [...] He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him. [...] He has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, [...] and the rich He has sent empty away. [...] He remembers His mercy, according to the promise which He made to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever.<sup>a</sup>

a. *Lk* 1:46-55.

Let us unite ourselves to Mary to beseech ceaselessly the coming of the Holy Spirit. Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love, the fire of Thy peace.

Amen, Alleluia.

