

Pope Francis on the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding and giving life to the Church.

Vatican City, Jun 8, 2014 ,



The first Pentecost “does not remain only limited to that moment, but is an event that is renewed and renews itself again. Christ, glorified at the right (hand) of the Father, continues to realize his promise, sending the Holy Spirit to enliven the Church who teaches us, reminds us, and makes us speak,” the Pope preached to the congregation at mass in St. Peter’s Basilica on June 8.

The Holy Spirit is the “interior Teacher,” explained the pontiff, guiding us “along the right path, throughout the situations of life.”

“In the early days of the Church, Christianity was called ‘the way’, and Jesus himself is the way. The Holy Spirit teaches us to follow him, to walk in his footsteps. More than a teacher of doctrine, the Spirit is a teacher of life.”

Pope Francis noted that the work of the Spirit is something “we have all experienced” - for example, in reading Scripture, when we are drawn to one passage after another and feel Christ speaking to us.

“The Spirit of truth and charity reminds us of all that Christ has said, makes us enter more fully into the sense of his words.”

This 'reminding' helps Christians remain fully in the Church, for "a Christian without memory is not a true Christian," he stressed. Rather he or she is a "prisoner of the moment, who doesn't know the treasures of his history, doesn't know to read it and live it like the story of salvation."

The Holy Spirit gives us "the wisdom of memory," which grows in us through prayer, another gift of the Spirit that allows us "to call God father - and this is not just a 'figure of speech,' but is the reality," Pope Francis emphasized.

It is not only the speech of prayer that the Holy Spirit gives us, however, but also "fraternal dialogue" and "prophecy," helping us to "speak with friendship, with tenderness," as "humble and docile 'channels,' for the word of God."

It was this power of the Holy Spirit that allowed the apostles to be heard in many different languages on that first Pentecost, explained Pope Francis later in his Angelus remarks.

"The book of Acts describes the signs and fruits of that extraordinary outpouring: the strong wind and the flames of fire; the fear disappears and gives way courage; tongues are loosened and everyone understands the announcement," he recounted to the crowds filling St. Peter's Square at noon on Sunday.

Pentecost marks the "birth of the Church," the Pope noted, which has two aspects: "a Church that surprises, and that makes a mess."

"Our God is a God of surprises, we know this," he exclaimed.

The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost "inspires awe because with the strength that comes from God, (the disciples) announce a new message - the Resurrection of Christ - with a new language - universal love."

Although Jesus' disciples had been gathered together in fear, at the Holy Spirit's coming they are empowered to "speak with courage...and frankness, with the freedom of the Holy Spirit."

Pope Francis then emphasized that the Holy Spirit leads Christians "into the world" to proclaim the gospel, even if at times it can be an uncomfortable truth for people.

"The Church of Pentecost is a Church that is not resigned to being innocuous," or just a "decorative element" in the world, he insisted.

Rather, "the Church does not hesitate to come out, meet the people, to proclaim the message that has been entrusted to it, even if that message disturbs and worries consciences."

The message, however, is a message of love, which "embraces the world" not to "capture" it but rather to "receive" it.

The Pope closed with his customary wishes for a "good Sunday and a good lunch."

