



Friar Juan Bautista Maíno – 1581-1649 – Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain

## The Fire of Love

**Happy Pentecost!** This is a celebration for all baptized. According to tradition, Christians have been celebrating this event since the first century. For many it is considered the second great feast after Easter. During the 50 days or seven weeks of Easter (from which the word Pentecost originates), we have been reading and reflecting in the daily readings of John the Evangelist on the meaning of **Love**. During the **last** weeks, we reflected on Jesus' great discourse; in the moments before His Passion, Death, and Resurrection, our Lord was preparing his disciples in the events to come.

This discourse included the culmination of the Salvation Mystery, which is the arrival of the Holy Spirit: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." John 16-13.

**But what does Pentecost mean? Why is this event so relevant in the Christian life?**

The **LUMEN GENTIUM Document**, Chapter 1, Numeral 4 explains the arrival of Pentecost as follows: *When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth (9) was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might continually sanctify the Church, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father.(10) He is the Spirit of Life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal.(11) To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through Him, until, in Christ, He brings to life their mortal bodies.(12) The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple.(13) In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons.(14) The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth(15) and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits.(16) By the power of the Gospel He makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly He renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse. (3\*) The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, "Come!"(17)*

We would like to invite you to reflect on these questions from a different perspective. Art has been regarded since ancient times as a medium of evangelizing. As such, we want to use our senses when appreciating a work of art.

The image of Pentecost on this page was painted by Friar Juan Bautista Maíno in the seventeenth century. This Baroque Pentecost captivates the senses for its great realism.

Let's look at the scene for a few moments. Look at the faces, gestures, expressions, and hands. Try to identify the characters, symbols, focal points, and other key elements.

To become more aware of the theology regarding the arrival of the Holy Spirit and this great event of Pentecost, we will reflect on two themes: **Unity through Community and the Transformative Force of Love.**



A Message from the Sails Catholic Society of Missionaries of God's Love

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

**Q: What are the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit?**

**A: CIC 1830:** "The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

These are permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit."

**CIC 1831:** "The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. 109 They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations".

**Q: What symbols does the Holy Spirit represent with?**

**A: CIC Extracts 694-701:**

**Water** signifies the Holy Spirit's action in Baptism.

**Anointing:** In Christian initiation, anointing is the sacramental sign of

Confirmation. **Fire** symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit's actions.

**Cloud and light:** In the theophanies of the Old Testament, the cloud, now obscure, now luminous, reveals the living and saving God.

**The hand:** Jesus heals the sick and blesses the children by laying hands on them. In his name the apostles will do the same.

**The dove,** at the end of the flood, whose symbolism refers to baptism. When Christ comes up of the water of his baptism.

Send us your questions  
[info@misioneroslaicos.org](mailto:info@misioneroslaicos.org)

### Unity through Community:

The Acts of the Apostles 1, 14 tells us, "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren", and in Acts 2-1: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place."

This tendency of being together in the days following the Lord's Ascension reached its climax at Pentecost. Look again at the artist's work. See how close they are to each other; we perceive an environment of trust. They knew Jesus and witnessed His mission on earth, and his death and resurrection, which bonds them powerfully. There is a key at Peter's feet reminding us that this is the Church that Christ founded, whom he loves as his wife.

We can also appreciate that there is diversity. We see faces of young people, others not so young, women, men; if we pay attention to the garments, there are characters in simple clothes. Even Peter appears barefoot, while the one who seems to represent Luke the Evangelist is finely dressed, representing the intellectual of the group.

This is how our Church was conceived and thus maintained in our day; amid diversity there will always be harmony.

**"Our principle of unity is the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that first of all we are God's beloved children, all the same, in this, and all different. The Spirit comes to us, in our differences and difficulties, to tell us that we have one Lord - Jesus -- and one Father, and that for this reason we are brothers and sisters! Let us begin anew from here; let us look at the Church with the eyes of the Spirit and not as the world does."**

| Homily of the Holy Father, Solemnity of Pentecost, 2020

The Virgin Mary, "full of Grace", is in the center of the group. She is in ecstasy, praising and worshiping. Her humility, trust, and total dedication to God's will enabled her to endure everything. She never despaired, she witnessed the saving mission of her Son and she is considered a pillar in the formation of the church, and loyal companion of the Apostles. Let us always seek our Holy Mother in prayer and ask her to also accompany us and intercede for us to open our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit and to receive the Love that He brings.

**Transformative force:** The dove has been used in the symbology of Israel since the time of Jesus Christ as a figure of Simple and Clean **Love** (Julio de la Vega-Hazas – Aleteia, 20/05/13). It is the symbol most used in Christian art to represent the Holy Spirit.

The term "Spirit" translates the Hebrew term Ruah, which in its first meaning is breath, air, or wind. Jesus himself explained to Nicodemus in John 3: "The air blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it comes from, or where it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Let us remember that we are temples of the Holy Spirit by baptism; He is already in us! let us be filled with that wonderful breath, that call of love, that transformative flame. The Apostles left the "upper room" without fear, speaking other languages, performing miracles, talking about Jesus, and taking his message everywhere they went. We are called to do the same: **don't be afraid.**

Let us be still and listen to what the Spirit tells us. It may well be to participate more actively in our parish, a ministry, prayer group, or bible study. In our families we can re-introduce praying as a family, before meals, even when we go to a restaurant.

Let us be faithful followers of Jesus and feel proud to say in a living voice that we love Him and that we follow Him.

**"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14).**

### Reflection

**Homily of the Holy Father Francis, St. Peter's Basilica – Altar of the Chair, May 31, 2020**

Holy Mass of the Solemnity of Pentecost

*"Brothers and sister, let us pray to him: Holy Spirit, memory of God, revive in us the memory of the gift received.*

*Free us from the paralysis of selfishness and awaken in us the desire to serve, to do good. Even worse than this crisis is the tragedy of squandering it by closing in on ourselves. Come, Holy Spirit: you are harmony; make us builders of unity. You always give yourself; grant us the courage to go out of ourselves, to love and help each other, in order to become one family. Amen.*