

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost, 2008

"I believe in the Holy Ghost."
(The Apostles' Creed)

The Apostles' Creed, so called because it contained the important articles of Faith handed down by the Apostles, is the first Creed that we learned in days gone by; it dealt with our belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. In the years that we have already lived, we have recited this Creed more often than we can remember. And over the years has our Faith, our knowledge of the Holy Ghost increased or waned? How often do we pray that Creed, at the beginning of the Rosary devotion and at other times, rather thoughtlessly and merely as a matter of routine? That is the reason why the Church in her Liturgy asks us to renew our Baptismal vows on certain occasion such as the vigil of the Resurrection, Holy Saturday night.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that before His Passover, Jesus announced the sending of “another Paraclete” (advocate). The Holy Spirit at work since creation, having previously spoken through the Prophets, now will be with an in the disciples to teach them and guide them “into all the truth”.

The Holy Spirit is thus revealed as another divine person with Jesus and the Father. Now it is important to remember this — that He is the third person of the most holy Trinity; one with, and equal in all things with, the Father and the Son. It is only when we contemplate this amazing truth that we realise the power that lies within us since our Baptism, when we were “baptised with water and the Holy Spirit”.

As children of God we are disciples of Christ and we received the Holy Spirit first in our Baptism; then we received those seven powerful gifts at our confirmation — our being made firm in the Faith. It is then necessary for us to cooperate with that Spirit of Love, of grace and Union. Not only believing in His existence but submitting to His teaching and guidance in all Truth. Almost every crisis in the Church has stemmed from souls who in one way or another seek to be independent of the Spirit of God; to form their own judgment on matters far beyond their competence. Reducing the working of the Holy Spirit to mere human dimensions; to our frail and limited intelligence.

From the earliest days, indeed from the creation of man, the Evil One has been causing rebellion in one form or another for those who wish to be faithful to the covenants established from time to time by Almighty God with mankind. And certainly from the very foundation of the Church crises small and great have afflicted the Mystical Body of Christ. A knowledge of the history of the Church based on fact and not on romantic imaginings is so necessary. Near to our own time there have been crises, terrifying in their intensity: Pope Pius IX is said to have been the Pope that was made to suffer most, with – among other problems – attacks on the Church’s position from surrounding secular states, until he became “the prisoner in the Vatican”. He of course condemned the modernist heresies, and approved the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

Indeed all the Popes of our own time have been made to suffer much; even to having their teachings ignored by organised groups of Catholics who were ignorant of the works carried out by those Pontiffs, and sometimes sadly ignorant by choice.

We must remain aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our souls; and we must submit to his teaching and guidance from the authority that He has established in the Vicar of Christ, to guide the Church. The late Pope John Paul II warned us a long time ago of the power of the anti-Christ when he told us: “The Church is facing the last and the longest crisis of its troubled history. The Church has always emerged triumphant, but only after the shedding of blood — it will be no different this time.”

We should think more often of those who are shedding their blood for the faith in many parts of our world of today — ignored by the godless ruling powers of the declining West. There is where our prayers and sympathies must be — with those souls known only to God. Let us turn to the Queen of Martyrs who so fully and humbly submitted to the promptings of the Holy Spirit with the words “Be it done unto me according to Thy word,” accepting the greatest sufferings out of love for ungrateful mankind which includes all of us. Beseech the Holy Spirit through the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of Christ to bring about in ourselves that necessary conversion through which we may join our prayers to those of our bless Mother with the same holy resignation of hearts seeking only to adore, to know, to love and obey.

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