

## Reflection for Pentecost, Year B

As the country starts to emerge from lockdown and hopefully so does the Church, we find ourselves celebrating the Feast of Pentecost, a highly symbolic feast, in a post-pandemic Church. This is a novel experience for all of us. It is tempting to look back at the last 15 months as a time of failure, loss or even annihilation. May I suggest that would be myopic and unrealistic. The pandemic has become for the Church a crossroads; for people of faith an opportunity to reflect on the credibility and relevance on their own personal faith and the faith of the Church. It has become a significant turning point in the life of the Church and the world. No one has escaped from the pandemic and no one has been untouched by its impact. We have all felt it socially, financially, emotionally, spiritually or psychologically. However, as we emerge from the pandemic, we also need to leave its story to the history books. They will tell of a significant time in history which will be recalled by future generations. People of faith are on a steep learning curve. They may have felt displaced, lost and even hurt as they tried to realign themselves to a new path and story of faith. There is no going back. We need to go forward. Like the apostles at Pentecost, we cannot go back; they could not retreat to the past or what went before. They had to go forward with hope and with a new sense of purpose because life is and will be different. Life for us has also changed and we are still learning. It is not easy; but the crossroads can and should be an opportunity for us to pause and reflect on our faith and to be renewed by it in a different and creative way. All is not lost. Reflect on these words of Pedro Arrupe sj which were written in 1978 when he was Father General of the Society of Jesus. Take courage! you will not be disappointed!

“Give me what you gave the Prophets: even if my little being protests, see me forced to speak by a supreme power. The word that came to them was not their own word but yours, of your Spirit, sent to them not only to create a new personality for service but also to explain its sense and secrets, of your Spirit that is not only intelligence and strength but also knowledge of God and God’s ways. Give me, then, the strength with which you may not only open up to the prophets your word to the point of revealing to them your glory, but also that strength that kept them standing as they spoke to the people and announced their fate. With that voice that you make grown in the depths of my being I seek the copious pouring out of yourself, like the rain that gives back life to the arid earth, and like a breath of life that comes to animate dry bones.

Give me that Spirit that scrutinizes all, inspires all, teaches all, that will strengthen me to support what I am not able to support. Give me that Spirit that transformed the weak Galilean fishermen into the columns of your Church and into apostles who gave in the holocaust of their lives the supreme testimony of their love for their brothers and sisters.

Thus, the life-giving outpouring will be like a new creation of hearts transformed, of a sensibility receptive to the voice of the Father, of a spontaneous fidelity to his word. Thus, you will find us again faithful and you will not hide your face from us because you will have poured your Spirit over us. Now I understand that in order to accomplish all this one needs a love like that of the Father, a love that intervenes personally. “You, Lord are our Father.... Why do you let us stray from your ways? Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down” (Isaiah 63: 15-19)”

Such was your divine manifestation: the heavens open, a God the Father visible, a God the Son coming down to the earth and becoming human to save the world: “This mystery that has now been revealed through the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets was unknown to human beings in past generations... This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father.” (Ephesians 3:5, 14). **Veni Sancte Spiritus!**