
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES



For Pentecost 1995 I published a pastoral letter on the importance of having parish communities concerned with the future of all its members, and now and in the weeks to come I would like to share excerpts of this letter with you.

A RUSHING MIGHTY WIND HAS RISEN

"A rushing mighty Wind filled the house of the Apostles, in every language God's marvellous deeds are proclaimed. Nations, understand and sing: 'Blessed are you, Creator Spirit who renews the universe. Kingdoms of the world, sing to God, play to the Lord; he it is who gives his people strength and power.'" [From the *Liturgie des Heures*]

Jesus had told his disciples that he would send them his Spirit, and on Pentecost day the promise came true. The Apostles were fearful, unstable in their faith; yet they became zealous missionaries, witnesses to the Resurrection of Christ at the risk of their lives. A mighty, nearly irresistible wind issued forth from the Upper Room in Jerusalem: It is the same tornado which blows on the Church, especially since the Second Vatican Council. Let us allow ourselves be propelled by this Pentecost wind; let us not attempt to stifle it, it is powered with the force of God.

MISSIONARIES WITH JESUS

We are no less fortunate than the first Apostles and the first disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit still comes among us; he always precedes us, wherever we go. He even precedes us in our decisions; he guides his people. He is the one who leads the Church, who gives it life and makes her bear the fruits of love and holiness. He it is who inspires our prayer and our life as a whole. He gives us the strength to bear witness and to love, the strength to remain faithful to our commitments as baptised, confirmed, forgiven, married, consecrated people.

At Baptism and again at Confirmation we truly received the Holy Spirit, along with his magnificent gifts. He asked us to pursue the work of Christ by labouring like him and with him, at building the Kingdom of God. He made us missionaries of the Gospel of Jesus.

At the very heart of our Jubilee Year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of our Diocese, I once again invite you to give thanks for this priceless gift which Jesus gave the world when he sent the Holy Spirit he had promised. Even today, Jesus does not cease to pour out the Holy Spirit into our hearts. The Spirit inhabits us, and this news must be communicated: He abides in the Church, He abides in our world.

Let us try to discover even more what we have become thanks to the Holy Spirit we have received and who gives life to our entire being. A holy anointing made us members of Jesus, Priest, Prophet, and King. Thanks to the Holy Spirit we can offer our entire lives, all humanity, to God. Thanks to the Holy Spirit we can build in our milieu a Christian community that is more and more concerned with the future of all its members.

"God who is faithful and just, hear the prayers of your Church at prayer as you heard the prayer of your Son Jesus. When the spirit in your Church grows weak, revive it with the breath of your Spirit so that it ponder the work of your hands in order to go forth in freedom and confidence towards Easter morning."

LET US WELCOME THE SPIRIT

Let us also repeat the prayer to the Holy Spirit that the Bishop Saint Augustine composed:

Breathe in me, Holy Spirit, that I may think holy thoughts.

Act in me, Holy Spirit, that I may do what is holy.

Draw me to you, Holy Spirit, that I may love what is holy.

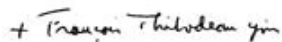
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may keep what is holy.

Keep me, Holy Spirit, that I never lose what is holy.

It is with reason that we can give thanks for all that the Holy Spirit accomplished in the early Church. Through the Acts of the Apostles, we can easily sense what vitality these early communities had, and what energy the Apostles and first disciples received, what strength was given to them to witness to the truth of the Resurrection of Jesus, even to martyrdom, to shedding their blood.

Everything was renewed through the Holy Spirit; hearts were changed, a new covenant was established in Jesus Christ, and a new heaven and a new earth were given. The entire Pentecost liturgy proclaims the power of the Spirit; He is the one who directs the choice of the first pastors, He is the one who teaches how to pray, He is the life of every baptised person. May this same Holy Spirit empower us today so that through our work, our witness and our prayer, Christian communities more and more according to the Heart of Jesus may arise in our midst. This is surely a wish that can be made regarding the renewal of Christian communities, as we stand on the threshold of the second half century of the Edmundston Diocese Church.

May these lines incite you, dearly beloved brothers and sisters, in the power of the Holy Spirit to work without faltering at building parish communities that are more and more "steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, faithful to the fellowship, the breaking of the bread and the prayers" [Acts 2:42].



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