

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

In Genesis we read that after the flood, "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, " I made man in God's image. So then, increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and have dominion over it."

The Church Fathers tell us that Noah and his sons were to go throughout the world, being the image of God.

"Now the whole earth was one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and dwelt there."

This was in disobedience to God's command to go throughout the world, being the image of God, instead they decided to settle in the land of Shinar.

The story continues: "Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire." They had brick for stone and asphalt for mortar. They also said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top will reach to heaven; and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the sons of men built. Then the Lord said, "Indeed, the people are one race and one language, and they have begun to do what they said. Now they will not fail to accomplish what they have undertaken. Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language, so they may not understand one another's speech." So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city and the tower. Therefore, its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the languages of all the earth; and from there the Lord God scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth."

At Shinar, the people sought to build a tower to "make a name for themselves" and settle there, although God had told them to go throughout the world, being the image of God. They decided to proclaim their own mighty works, instead of the mighty works of God.

We heard in the Epistle today that, after the dissent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples of Jesus could be heard telling the people in their own tongues the mighty works of God.

After rising from the dead and appearing to his disciples, Jesus had said to the them, as he was taken up into heaven, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit had been promised by God throughout the Old Testament. The prophet Ezekiel had prophesied:

"A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will put my Spirit within you".

The prophet Joel prophesied:

After this it shall come to pass that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. And in those days I shall pour out My Spirit on My servants and on My handmaids.

When the 50th day after the resurrection had come, all the disciples were gathered with one accord in the upper room. They were devoting themselves to prayer and hymns to God. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:1 – 11). This is the sound which the prophetess Hannah foretold when she received the promise concerning Samuel: "The Lord went up to heaven and thundered; and he shall give strength and exalt the horn of his anointed" (cf. 1 Sam. 2:10).

The Holy Spirit that Christ had promised to his disciples came on that day, Pentecost.

The apostles received "the power from on high," and they began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord.

Jesus had taught many times concerning the Holy Spirit. We heard in today's Gospel, Jesus say: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

"Now on the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood and spoke loudly, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink! From within whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, will flow rivers of living water!" But he said this concerning the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

If you would recall, Jesus had said to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water. Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst forever; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

This was the Holy Spirit that Jesus was offering to her.

Jesus also said in the Gospel of John:

If you love me, keep my commandments! I will pray to the Father and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive him because it does not see him and does not know him. But you know him, because he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans! I will come to you! In a short time, the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live! In that day, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, that person is the one who loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love and reveal myself to such a person." Judas (not Iscariot) asked him, "Lord, what has happened that you are about to reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered him, "The one who

loves me will keep my word; my Father will love him and we shall come to him and make a home in him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. The word which you hear is not mine, but it belongs to the Father who sent me. I have said these things to you while still living with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit which the Father will send in my Name, will teach you all things and remind you of all that I said to you.

On Pentecost we have the final fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the beginning of the messianic age of the Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah.

The Feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. All who have been baptized have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit. We have become the "temples of the Holy Spirit." God's Spirit dwells in us. We, by our membership in the Church, have received "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the sacrament of chrismation. Pentecost has happened to us.

When the Spirit came upon the disciples He came like a mighty wind. He appeared as tongues of fire and lighted upon the believers. As a result of the Holy Spirit's presence, the disciples began to proclaim the mighty acts of God and to speak in foreign tongues. Here we see the clear reversal of Babel, when the people tried to build a tower which would reach into heaven. God saw this and confused the languages that the people were speaking so that they were unable to complete the tower.

At Babel men sought to go up, proclaiming their own mighty works, and forged a false unity. In Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when peoples had gathered together from every nation under heaven to worship, God gave the gift of foreign languages to his disciples to remove the language barrier. He equipped his disciples with the necessary tools to make clear the glorious truths of the Gospel.

A true unity, a new race of Christians was formed. Here we see the mercy of God triumphing over judgment. No longer would mankind be hopelessly divided and confused. The Son of God had died and has resurrected humanity in His flesh. Now the Spirit comes to indwell in the church and the individuals therein, and to graft them into this new race, this new humanity, which is the body of Christ (Eph.2:11-22,4:7-16) so that with one voice we might glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, never to be divided again.

Now the primary commission which had been given to our first parents to be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it and rule over it, would be accomplished in history by the power of the Holy Spirit. What our first parents and their offspring would not do, the Church would now do victoriously by bringing the gospel of God's grace to the whole world, restoring his fallen image in man by the preaching the Word of God and healing mankind through the holy Sacraments. We see this reality fulfilled as we observe the immediate effect the presence of the Spirit had upon the disciples. What was for a time a small band huddled in prayer in an upper room in fear of the Jewish authorities became a mighty army testifying publicly and from house to house about the Lord Jesus.

St. Peter went from denying the Lord in cowardice to preaching to thousands in the streets of Jerusalem. Thus a few people in a short time became a congregation of thousands, spread to Rome, India, Egypt, Gaul, Britain, and to the extremities of our world, leaving the marks of the Spirit's presence wherever they went - transformed lives, fervent worship, abounding love, and the true unity which would forever serve as the proof that Babel had been overcome by Pentecost. The healing of human divisions has taken place. The reunion of mankind is at hand. The great hope of mankind is not the governments of the world. The great hope for mankind is the Holy Spirit! And we Christians are children of Pentecost not of Babel.