



“Pentecost and Trinity”

Easter, Ascension, Pentecost—the Rising of Jesus culminates in the pouring out of the Spirit in wind and fire. Think along with me about what the Fathers of the Church tell us of these mysteries.

“The . . . Son of Man was revealed as Son of God in a more perfect . . . way once he had entered into his Father’s glory,” *St. Leo the Great* says of the Ascension. Abiding with his disciples in his gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus “now began to be indescribably more present in his divinity to those from whom he was further removed in his humanity.”

“Taken separately, we are many,” *St. Cyril of Alexandria* points out, “and Christ sends the Spirit, who is both the Father’s Spirit and his own, to dwell in each of us. . . . If the one Spirit dwells in us, the one God and Father of all will be in us, and he, through his Son, will gather together into unity with one another and with himself all who share in the Spirit.”

As *St. Irenaeus* reminds us, that unity is Eucharistic. “Like dry flour, which cannot become one lump of dough, one loaf of bread, without moisture, we who are many could not become one in Christ Jesus without the water that comes down from heaven. And like parched ground, which yields no harvest unless it receives moisture, we . . . could never have lived and borne fruit without this

abundant rainfall from above. . . . If we are not to be scorched and made unfruitful, we need the dew of God.” In the Second Eucharistic Prayer we ask the Father to make the bread and wine holy “by sending down your Holy Spirit upon them like the dewfall.”

St. Cyril of Jerusalem asks why Our Lord called the grace of the Spirit water. “Water comes down from heaven as rain, and although it is always the same in itself, it produces many different effects, one in the palm tree, another in the vine, and so on throughout the whole of creation. It does not come down, now as one thing, now as another, but while remaining essentially the same, it adapts itself to the needs of every creature that receives it. In the same way the Holy Spirit . . . apportions grace to each man as he wills. . . . His action is different in different people, but the Spirit himself is always the same. . . . The Spirit comes to enlighten the mind first of the one who receives him, and then, through him, the minds of others as well.”

“We receive the Spirit of truth so that we can know the things of God,” *St. Hilary* teaches. “In order to grasp this, consider how useless the faculties of the human body would become if they were denied their exercise. Our eyes cannot fulfill their task without light . . . ; our ears cannot react without sound vibrations, and in the absence of any odor our nostrils are ignorant of their function. Not that these senses would lose their own nature if they were not used; rather, they demand objects of experience in order to function. It is the same with the human soul. Unless it absorbs the gift of the Spirit through faith, the

mind has the ability to know God but lacks the light necessary for that knowledge.”

May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds anew—and then give us courage to live what we know.