

W E E K L Y M E D I T A T I O N

Fifty days after Passover, many observant Jews were in Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of Pentecost. This was a feast connected with the annual wheat harvest. These pilgrims came from all over the middle east and beyond. Isn't it interesting that this feast of the unique coming of the Holy Spirit, whose basic work is to make known Christ, Who is the Bread of Heaven, the Living Bread, is associated with the wheat harvest?

The Lord's small band of disciples had gathered at this feast. Suddenly the sound of a great wind filled the house in which they were meeting. Something that looked very much like dancing flames of fire - tongues of fire - appeared and settled over each of them. The disciples began to speak in languages that they themselves did not even know. But pilgrims overhearing them were amazed because the disciples were speaking in their native languages.

Some thought the disciples were drunk. But Peter began to preach to the crowd that had gathered. He said that just as the prophet Joel had foreseen - *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh* - these events were the fulfillment of God's plan. In Jesus of Nazareth, God's promised Messiah had finally come. Although He had been handed over to wicked men and crucified, He had been raised from the dead and seen by many people.

Peter's words touched the hearts of many in the crowd of pilgrims. They asked the disciples - now apostles, proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Savior - they asked what they should do. Peter replied that they should repent and be baptized and that those who would do so would not only be forgiven their sins but receive the Holy Spirit - the sanctifying gift of God - Who would dwell within them. About 3,000 people accepted the words of Peter and were baptized.

This dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit is often called the 'birthday of the Church'.

May that same Holy Spirit ignite in us the fire of zealous faith and empower us to be agents of His renewing love, in Christ.

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