

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH + YORKVILLE

May 19, 2024 (Pentecost)

Newsletter no. 218

This Sunday is the feast of Pentecost, which concludes the fifty-day Easter Season. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples after his departure from this world, which we remembered at Mass on Ascension Thursday. The feast of Pentecost commemorates Jesus' sending of the Spirit ten days after his ascension and fifty days after his resurrection, and it provides an opportunity to say something about the Spirit, who is in many ways the least knowable of the three persons of the Trinity.

Why the least knowable? The very term "Holy Spirit" tells us little if anything about the third person of the Trinity that points to his individuality, since, after all, each one of the three divine persons is holy and each one is a spirit. Moreover, the Bible, which is supposed to reveal God to us, reveals hardly anything about the Spirit. When God speaks in the Old Testament, we tend to attribute his words to the Father, and in the New Testament it is Jesus who speaks, but the Holy Spirit seems mute.

In both the Old and the New Testaments it is often possible to confuse the Holy Spirit with our own spirit, the mysterious part of a human being that is something like the soul. And when it is clear that the Holy Spirit is being referred to and not the human spirit, the Bible mostly seems vague. What makes him distinct from the other two persons? Jesus regularly speaks of his Father; indeed, one of the reasons that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate was to reveal his Father to us, and he does this consistently throughout the four Gospels. Thanks to the way in which Jesus speaks of him, we can form some sort of mental picture of the Father, however imperfect it may be; we can imagine him precisely as a father-figure, as hundreds of artists have done over the centuries. But, because we are told in the Gospels that the Holy Spirit appeared at Jesus' baptism in the form of a dove, the picture that we have of the Spirit is that of a dove. I suspect, though, that it is hard for most people to relate to a dove; the image seems bland and impersonal. What does it tell us about the Spirit? And when Jesus himself speaks of the Spirit, as he does mostly in the Gospel of John, it often seems very abstract—for example in John 16:13-15: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." Statements such as these on the lips of Jesus aren't easy to understand.

What are we to make of the obscurity in which the third person of the Trinity is veiled? It must be that Sacred Scripture never intended to give the obvious prominence to the Spirit that it does to the Father and the Son. This suggests to us that the Spirit's presence and activity is intentionally hidden and mysterious and that, whereas the work of the Father and the Son blazes forth for all to see in the creation of the world and in the redemption of the human race, the work of the Spirit—no less real than the work of the other two divine persons—occurs deep within the human soul.

Next weekend Fr. Jerry Aman, S.J. will speak at all the Masses as part of the yearly appeal on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Father Aman has been a priest for more than fifty years and has worked in Africa, particularly Nigeria, for nearly forty of those years. Please welcome Father Aman to St. Joseph's Church.

Father Boniface

Mass intentions for the period from May 18th to 26th

Saturday-Sunday, May 18th-19th (Pentecost)

4:00 pm: Barbara Welch (D)
8:00 am: Virginia Taylor (D)
10:00 am: Vincenzo Mangiafridda (D)
12:00 noon: Frank O'Callaghan (D)
2:00 pm (Hungarian): Csuma Juliana (D)
6:00 pm: St. Joseph's Parishioners

Monday, May 20th

7:00 am: Walter Bedell (D)
12:15 pm: Leo Grant (D)

Tuesday, May 21st

7:00 am: Walter Bedell (D)
12:15 pm: Austin Grech (D)

Wednesday, May 22nd

7:00 am:
12:15 pm: Meave Burke Shugrue (D)

Thursday, May 23rd

7:00 am:
12:15 pm: Mojgan Sobhani (L)

Friday, May 24th

7:00 am:
12:15 pm: Ernestine Wallner (L)

Saturday, May 25th

8:00 am:
12:15 pm:
4:00 pm: Donald Dunne, Jr. (D)

Sunday, May 26th (Trinity Sunday)

8:00 am: Angela and Dennis Bartholomeusz (D)
10:00 am: Yaneth Marmolejo (D)
12:00 noon: Fergus O'Tighearnaigh (D)
2:00 pm (Hungarian): Etel Usztoke (D)
6:00 pm: St. Joseph's Parishioners