

continually hindering the work of grace. The Holy Spirit struggles against our wills, and cannot accomplish our sanctification. Mortal sin grieves the Comforter and drives Him away. Venial sin wounds Him, prevents the operation of His grace, and clogs the whole spiritual life. The flesh rises up with its stimulus of concupiscence, and passions unsubdued distract and divide our affections. We are anxious and fretful, only because the Spirit of peace is not our guide. Can we never find rest from warfare, and freedom from the persecutions of self-love? "O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from, this body of death?" Yes, rest will come when we have obtained perfect victory over passion. Peace will be ours when we yield our whole being to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, and the life of God is in us. That life is power by which sin and death may be utterly subdued. Let us only be obedient to God and the divine life will produce its blessed fruits of peace. The embraces of the Paraclete will be an anticipation of heaven and an imitation of the raptures of our holy Mother, whose unclouded eyes were always fixed upon the celestial glory. And as we have been so often unfaithful, let us trust to the intercession of Mary to bring back to us the light of the Holy Spirit. Her prayers will be all-powerful with her spouse.

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Pamphlet 331

## **The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the Apostles**

Fr. Thomas S. Preston

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the Apostles, assembled in the Upper Room, signaled the official birth of the Church and its presentation to the world.

When our Lord had gone into heaven the apostles returned to Jerusalem, and spent their time at the temple in prayer. Mary returned with them, and under her guidance they passed their great novena. Ten days were given them to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit. Mary interceded for them and with them that our Lord would be mindful of His word, and send the powerful Paraclete upon them, who should more than make up for the loss of His visible presence: "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). At Mary's feet they learned something of the meaning of this promise, and were daily in expectation of the great gift of the Father. During this short time the Mother of God presided in their councils, the number of the twelve apostles was filled up, and the foundations of the church were securely laid. When the tenth day had come they were assembled together in the temple, waiting for the completion of our Lord's promise. The great festival had called a vast multitude of Jews and

proselytes from all Judea and the surrounding country. Great numbers were flocking to the temple from all parts of the city. The Mother of God and the twelve apostles were together in a small upper room, unknown and unnoticed amid the great throng of worshippers. Suddenly there was a sound as of a rushing, mighty wind. The temple trembled on its foundations. The Holy Spirit came down with might and power upon the disciples. First of all He crowned with light the holy Virgin, who was His own spouse, and then rested upon the apostles. Their faces were kindled with His glory, their whole bodies were lighted up with a heavenly radiance, and over their heads were cloven tongues of fire. The new creation had taken place. There was chaos no more in the moral world. The Spirit of God brooded upon the shapeless waters, and out of them came forth the church in life and beauty. The divisions of Babel were broken down, and the fold of Christ was opened to all the nations of the earth. The twelve were overwhelmed with the greatness of their vocation, as they saw the outlines of the kingdom over which they were to reign. Their eyes were opened, and the truths their Master had taught them were all made clear. They opened their mouths, and the gospel of Christ came full and fervent from their lips. The multitude crowded around to hear their words, and in every language they spoke of the way of salvation through Christ. St. Peter began his work, and on that day more than three thousand were added to the flock. It was a day more wonderful than the day of the first creation, even as the spiritual life is more wonderful than the natural life. The

Mother of God was glorified with these triumphs of the Holy Spirit. She received His consolations in her heart and she rejoiced at the new victories of her Son. To her it was a day of peace. The blessed Paraclete, who had ever filled her heart and consecrated her whole being, now came to open to her new and new mysteries in the economy of salvation. She began to understand better than ever her own place in the work of redemption. The path through which she had come was illumined with the light of God's providence. She saw the full meaning of every word and work and look of her Son. All His labors and sorrows came back to her. The days of His blessed resurrection were before her mind, and every word which fell from His glorified lips seemed pregnant with wonderful power. She had ever bent adoringly before Him and had loved Him with the fullness of her heart. Now a new tenderness came over her, and she melted in an ecstasy of affection towards Him who was bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh. A deep and quiet joy sank down to the depths of her spirit, and she could only repeat the words of her *Magnificat*: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" (Lk 1:46-47). God had chosen her out of all the tribes of earth to be His mother. She had borne Him in her womb, had nourished Him at her breast, had been with Him in all His sorrows, and had seen Him ascend into heaven. He was her own child. His interests were hers, and His glory was hers also. Her raptures on this day were the embraces of her own celestial spouse, and a peace passing all understanding filled every faculty of

her spirit. God alone can tell what new graces were poured into her heart, for the dizzy height of sanctity on which she stood is far beyond the sight of sinners like us. "The well of living waters ran with a strong stream from Libanus." The Lord came into His own garden, and the aromatical spices thereof exhaled their perfume. But Mary also rejoiced at the wonderful works of the new creation. The church of God was born on this day, and the great energies of the sacraments began to put forth their strength. In Jerusalem was her rest, and in Zion her home. She was to exercise her office of Mother to all the spiritual children of her Son, and the nations were to be gathered to her feet. The triumphs of the church were her joy on this day, and the fruits of faith, which were to spring forth within it, were the consolation of her maternal heart. The Holy Spirit, who had made heaven so near to her, was now to dwell on earth, and to make its sterile plains a garden for the Lord of Hosts. In remembrance of this glory of the Blessed Virgin, we ought to lift up our hearts to a participation in her joy. We are her children, and her interests ought to be ours. Her work in our souls is our sanctification. She has no other care for us, and no temporal interests can divert her from this great work. If we have been obedient to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit we can share in her heavenly peace. Infidelity to God disturbs the tranquility of our souls, and makes us to wander in shadows and darkness. We are neither cheerful nor peaceful, only because we are