



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** St Peter's Square

Wednesday, 19 June 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

Fifty days after Easter, in that Upper Room which is by this time their home and where the presence of Mary, the Lord's mother is the bonding factor, the Apostles experience an event that exceeds their expectations. Gathered in prayer — prayer is the 'lung' that gives breath to the disciples of all times; without prayer one cannot be a disciple of Jesus, without prayer we cannot be Christian! It is the air, it is the lungs of Christian life — they are surprised by *God's irruption*. It is an *irruption that does not tolerate what is closed: it thrusts open the doors* through the strength of a wind that recalls *ruah*, the primordial breath and fulfills the promise of "power" made by the Risen One before he takes his leave (cf. Acts 1:8). Suddenly from on high, "a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting" (Acts 2:2).

The wind is then joined by fire which recalls the burning bush and Sinai with the gift of the ten words (cf. Ex 19:16-19). In biblical tradition, fire accompanies the manifestation of God. It is in fire that God delivers his living and active word (cf. Heb 4:12) that opens to the future; fire symbolically expresses his work of heating, illuminating and probing hearts, his care in testing the endurance of human works, purifying and renewing them. While we hear God's voice on Sinai, during the feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem, it is Peter who speaks, the rock on which Christ chose to build his Church. His word, weak and even capable of denying the Lord, filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit, gains strength, it becomes capable of piercing hearts and moving to conversion. Indeed God chooses what is foolish in the world in order to confound the wise (cf. 1 Cor 1:27).

The Church is thus born from the fire of love and from a "*fire*" that blazes on Pentecost and manifests the power of the Word of the Risen One imbued with the Holy Spirit. *The new and definitive Covenant is no longer founded on a law that is written on two stone tablets, but on the action of the Spirit of God which makes all things new and is etched on hearts of flesh.*

The word of the Apostles is filled with the Spirit of the Risen One and becomes a new, different

word which however can be understood, almost as if it were translated simultaneously into all languages: Indeed “each one heard them speaking in their own language” (Acts 2:6) . It is the *language of truth and love* which is the *universal language*: even illiterate people can understand it. Everyone understands the language of truth and love. If you go with the truth in your heart, with sincerity, and go with love, everyone will understand you. Even if you cannot speak, but with a caress that is true and loving.

Not only does the Holy Spirit manifest himself via *a symphony of sounds that unite and harmonize the various parts*, but he also presents himself as an orchestra conductor who directs the performance of the scores of praises for God’s “great works”. The Holy Spirit is the *architect of communion*, *he is the artist of reconciliation who knows how to remove the barriers* between Hebrews and Greeks, between slaves and free people, in order to make them a single body. He edifies the community of believers, harmonizing the body and the multiplicity of limbs. He makes the Church grow, helping it to exceed human limitations, sin and any scandal whatsoever.

The astonishment is great, and some might wonder if those men are inebriated. Then Peter intervenes on behalf of all the Apostles and rereads that event in the light of Joel 3, where a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit is announced. Followers of Jesus are not inebriated, but experience what Saint Ambrose defined as “the sober inebriation of the Spirit”, which through dreams and visions kindles prophesy among the People of God. This prophetic gift is not reserved to only a few, but to all those who invoke the name of the Lord.

Henceforth, from that moment, the Spirit of God moves hearts to receive the salvation that passes through one Person, Jesus Christ, the One whom men nailed to the wood of the Cross and whom God raised from the dead, “having loosed the pangs of death” (Acts 2:24). He is the One who emanated that Spirit who composes the polyphony of praises and whom everyone can hear. As [Benedict XVI](#) stated: “Pentecost is this: Jesus, and through him God himself, actually comes to us and draws us to himself” ([Homily, 3 June 2006](#)). The Spirit works through divine attraction: God captivates us with his Love and thus engages us, in order to move history and set in motion the processes through which new life seeps in. Indeed, only the Spirit of God has the power to *humanize and create fraternity* in every context, beginning with those who welcome him.

Let us ask the Lord to enable us to experience a new Pentecost, which expands our hearts and harmonizes our sentiments with Christ’s, so that we may proclaim without shame his transformative Word and witness to the power of the love that beckons to life all that it encounters.

Special Greetings

I welcome all the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today’s Audience, especially those from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Australia, India, Indonesia, Canada and the

United States of America. My special greeting goes to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Youth Peace Messengers from Japan. I also greet the winners of the traditional Bible Contest of the Holy Land. Upon all of you I invoke the joy and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God bless you!

I am happy to welcome *young people, the elderly, the sick and newlyweds*, especially the couples from the Diocese of Tivoli, Italy. The day after tomorrow we will celebrate the liturgical memorial of Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, an admirable example of austerity and evangelical purity. Invoke him, that he may help you to build an intimate friendship with Jesus who enables you to live your life with serenity.