



**All were filled
with the Holy Spirit
and began
to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.
... and each one heard them speaking
in his own language.**

Acts 2:4.6

+ Rome, May 26, 2009

Dear Sisters,

In a few days we will celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. From all outward appearances, it is rather a “silent” feast in contrast to Christmas and Easter. It does not bring any profit to the business world. Many do not know at all why we actually celebrate Pentecost. This is proven by a survey taken in Germany some years ago in which 25% of the respondents expressed no knowledge of this feast. A third of the respondents associated the coming of the Holy Spirit with Pentecost and 30% of the interviewees confused Pentecost with Easter or the Ascension of Christ. A small percentage related it to the baptism or crucifixion of Christ. Sometimes we realize that even faithful Christians have a certain distance in their relation to the third person of the Trinity. Pentecost is just so totally different from Christmas with the Child in the manger, so totally different from Easter when the light illuminates the night. Birth and death – these are realities of life with which we come in contact. But Pentecost? How can we encounter the Holy Spirit? Do we experience his presence in our life, in our spiritual (spirit-ual) life?

Let us take a look into our Constitutions. In Article 1 we read: “In baptism, the Father has ... poured the Spirit of love into our hearts.” Already 2000 years ago St. Paul wrote the same to the Romans: “The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Rom 5:5) We can only live our vocation, a gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Article 34), with the grace of the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Article 41) Article 5 of our Constitutions challenges us to let ourselves be permeated by the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of love, joy, peace etc. “Fired by the Holy Spirit, our obedience leads us to full maturity in Christ.” (Article 25) Article 28 describes unity with the spirit as the foundation of our community life. “This deep unity [is] a gift of the Spirit,” the Article says, “rooted in a living faith.”

Dear Sisters, our Constitutions show us very clearly that life as a Christian and even more so as a Religious is not possible without the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot live spiritually (spirit-ually) – not as individuals and even less as a community. Where the Holy Spirit is, there is community, *communio*, and where *communio* is, there is the Spirit of God who transforms fearful persons into enthusiastic witnesses, as the Acts of the Apostles tell us. “All these (the Apostles) devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and the brothers. ... When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind... All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues.” (cf. Acts 1:14; Acts 2:1-4)

The picture from Clara Winkler, which I chose for this letter, shows very impressively the enormous power, the enthusiasm which captured those present when the Holy Spirit came to them. The coming of the Holy Spirit had such a force that the place was shaking, as we read in another chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. (Cf. Acts 4:31) In Greek the word for shaking is “saleuo,” which means: to move, to shake, to rock, to resonate. “The Holy Spirit generates a resonance in the community. Their hearts are becoming one, they are tuned to the same wavelength. They are getting rocked and shaken. The whole person is getting stirred up. From this drive emanates a force. And this force is seen in the frankness with which they proclaim the Word of God.” (P. Anselm Grün, OSB) A holy fire, a tremendous force of love is capturing the community gathered in prayer. Their tongues are loosening up and they sally out to proclaim the Good News, as we can see in the lower part of the picture. They are spirit-filled people who inspire others. People are gathered in Jerusalem from all over the world, speaking many different languages, and yet understanding the message of the Apostles. They hear them talking in their own language, in their MOTHER language, in the language of love. This language is always understood equally by people, whether they speak Italian, English, German, Spanish or any other language. The language of love is understood. How often I heard that from Sisters during our international meetings! Whoever has once experienced this love deep in her heart knows that today we can also experience the miracle of Pentecost, the miracle that people understand each other. “Pentecost can become the starting point of a spirit-filled life, a new beginning to dialogue with each other in the right way. How much we live from God’s Spirit has to become visible in our daily life. Our words have to bring fruit, fruit that comes from the Spirit. The word becomes alive when it is truly a word of love.” (Helmut Krug)

Dear Sisters, let us ask time and again for this “new Pentecost” for our community, especially during this year during which we consider the “journey” of reconfiguration of community at its various levels. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity. He makes it possible to be “one heart and one soul.” Then a great force will emanate from us and we will become a community which breaks out from our limitedness in order to fulfil together the mission entrusted to us: to go out to all the world and bring the good news – love, justice, peace (Article 32) and to carry the Christ Light by our love into all our ministries. (Cf. Document of the General Chapter 2007)

Come, Holy Spirit.
 We absolutely need you.
 You giver of life.
 You consuming fire.
 You sparkling font in our life.
 You cool wind in our world.
 You liberator of our narrow-mindedness.
 You whirlwind in illusory calmness.
 You animator against fear.
 You inspiration from heaven.
 You lover of variety.
 You bond of unity.
 Come, Holy Spirit.

Information:

- I want to remind you of the change in the provincial leadership in the Chilean Province which will take place on Pentecost (May 31). Let us recommend the Sisters who will assume the service of leadership to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In gratitude we also pray for Sister Luisa Pozo, Sister María Clara Medina and Sister María Fidelis Váldez who will leave the office of provincial leadership. May they continue to experience the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their future mission and ministry!

- During my last visit to our mission in the Philippines at the end of April/beginning of May I could once again reassure myself of the fruitful service our Sisters offer to the blind. Already four of our blind attend college in order to prepare themselves for a profession. The blind who cannot go to a regular school are assisted individually in the learning center and the workshop of Margaretha Home. What is of special importance is that the blind are given loving care, trust and respect, as it is expressed in the Mission Statement of the Sisters: “Our Eucharistic life-style empowers and impels us to be Christ’s light in our *Church of the Poor*. (Remark: The Church in the Philippines defines herself in this way.) As truly women of Christ-like love, we want to uplift and guide the blind and those who are in need in our wounded world with an undivided, happy heart.” The blind themselves express their gratitude time and again. In the first stanza of “their” song, they sing: “Margaretha for us is paradise, our honored home and faithful heart that forms our whole being,”. And then follows the refrain: “O thank you, Lord, I am filled with joy! Because now I know that you truly love me. Although I am blind and can’t see the world, Margaretha is given to me and becomes my eyes.” The other stanzas you can find on the Philippine Webpage (<http://www.sccgen.org/phil-unit.html>). I ask you not to forget this important mission in your prayers. The harvest is great, the personnel for that too few.
- In May we could begin with the renewal courses here in Rome. Right now a group from South America is with us. They will continue their renewal in Germany on May 26. On May 27 we expect a group from the German Province who will stay until June 10. Ten younger Sisters will be in Rome from June 30 to July 9 and then from July 9 to 17 in Paderborn. The last group of Sisters from the USA will begin their renewal in Rome on July 20 and continue in Paderborn from August 3 to 11. I recommend all these groups to your prayers, dear Sisters.
- My next travel is to the United States. From June 1 to 9 I will make a short visit in the Eastern Province. From there I will travel to the Western Province, where I will first participate in the Assembly and the jubilee celebration for this year’s jubilarians. Following this I will offer a renewal course with the theme “Letting Go” for a group of Sisters. My return trip to Rome is planned for June 22.

I repeat my wishes for a Spirit-filled Pentecost. Like the Spirit of change and exodus that was active in Mother Pauline’s life so may we also open ourselves more and more to his powerful, and at the same time, silent work within us!

With hearty greetings from all the Sisters of our Generalate community I am in gratitude
your

Sr. Adalberto