



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

TO TURKEY

(28-30 NOVEMBER 2014)

HOLY MASS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, Istanbul

Saturday, 29 November 2014

[Multimedia]

In the Gospel, Jesus shows himself to be the font from which those who thirst for salvation draw upon, as the Rock from whom the Father brings forth living waters for all who believe in him (cf. *Jn* 7:38). In openly proclaiming this prophecy in Jerusalem, Jesus heralds the gift of the Holy Spirit whom the disciples will receive after his glorification, that is, after his death and resurrection (cf. v. 39).

The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. He *gives life*, he *brings forth different charisms* which enrich the people of God and, above all, he *creates unity* among believers: from the many he makes one body, the Body of Christ. The Church's whole life and mission depend on the Holy Spirit; he fulfils all things.

The profession of faith itself, as Saint Paul reminds us in today's first reading, is only possible because it is prompted by the Holy Spirit: "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 *Cor* 12:3b). When we pray, it is because the Holy Spirit inspires prayer in our heart. When we break the cycle of our self-centredness, and move beyond ourselves and go out to encounter others, to listen to them and help them, it is the Spirit of God who impels us to do so. When we find within a hitherto unknown ability to forgive, to love someone who doesn't love us in return, it is the Spirit who has taken hold of us. When we move beyond mere self-serving words

and turn to our brothers and sisters with that tenderness which warms the heart, we have indeed been touched by the Holy Spirit.

It is true that the Holy Spirit brings forth *different charisms* in the Church, which at first glance, may seem to create disorder. Under his guidance, however, they constitute an immense richness, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which is not the same thing as uniformity. Only the Holy Spirit is able to kindle *diversity*, multiplicity and, at the same time, bring about *unity*. When we try to create diversity, but are closed within our own particular and exclusive ways of seeing things, we create division. When we try to create unity through our own human designs, we end up with uniformity and homogenization. If we let ourselves be led by the Spirit, however, richness, variety and diversity will never create conflict, because the Spirit spurs us to experience variety in the communion of the Church.

The diversity of members and charisms is harmonized in the Spirit of Christ, whom the Father sent and whom he continues to send, in order to *achieve unity* among believers. The Holy Spirit brings unity to the Church: unity in faith, unity in love, unity in interior life. The Church and other Churches and ecclesial communities are called to let themselves be guided by the Holy Spirit, and to remain always open, docile and obedient. It is he who brings harmony to the Church. Saint Basil the Great's lovely expression comes to mind: "*Ipse harmonia est*", He himself is harmony .

Ours is a hopeful perspective, but one which is also demanding. The temptation is always within us to resist the Holy Spirit, because he takes us out of our comfort zone and unsettles us; he makes us get up and drives the Church forward. It is always easier and more comfortable to settle in our sedentary and unchanging ways. In truth, the Church shows her fidelity to the Holy Spirit in as much as she does not try to control or tame him. And the Church shows herself also when she rejects the temptation to look only inwards. We Christians become true missionary disciples, able to challenge consciences, when we throw off our defensiveness and allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit. He is freshness, imagination and newness.

Our defensiveness is evident when we are entrenched within our ideas and our own strengths – in which case we slip into Pelagianism – or when we are ambitious or vain. These defensive mechanisms prevent us from truly understanding other people and from opening ourselves to a sincere dialogue with them. But the Church, flowing from Pentecost, is given the fire of the Holy Spirit, which does not so much fill the mind with ideas, but enflames the heart; she is moved by the breath of the Spirit which does not transmit a power, but rather an ability to serve in love, a language which everyone is able to understand.

In our journey of faith and fraternal living, the more we allow ourselves to be humbly guided by the Spirit of the Lord, the more we will overcome misunderstandings, divisions, and disagreements and be a credible sign of unity and peace, a credible sign that our Lord is risen and he is alive.

With this joyful conviction, I embrace all of you, dear brothers and sisters: the Syro-Catholic Patriarch, the President of the Bishops' Conference, the Apostolic Vicar Monsignor Pelâtre, the Bishops and Eparchs, the priests and deacons, religious, lay faithful, and believers from other communities and various rites of the Catholic Church. I wish to greet with fraternal affection the Patriarch of Constantinople, His Holiness Bartholomew I, the Syro-Orthodox Metropolitan and the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchal Vicar, as well as the representatives of the Protestant communities, who have joined us in prayer for this celebration. I extend to them my gratitude for this fraternal gesture. I wish also to express my affection to the Armenian Patriarch, His Beatitude Mesrob II, assuring him of my prayers.

Brothers and sisters, let us turn our thoughts to the Virgin Mary, the holy Mother of God. With her, who prayed with the Apostles in the Upper Room as they awaited Pentecost, let us pray to the Lord asking him to send his Holy Spirit into our hearts and to make us witnesses of his Gospel in all the world. Amen!