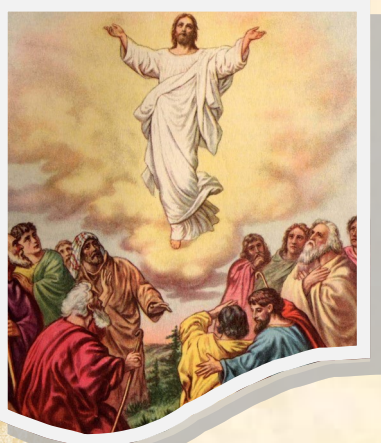


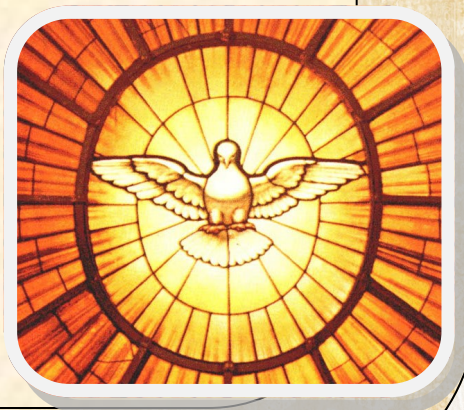
Great Feasts of the Church



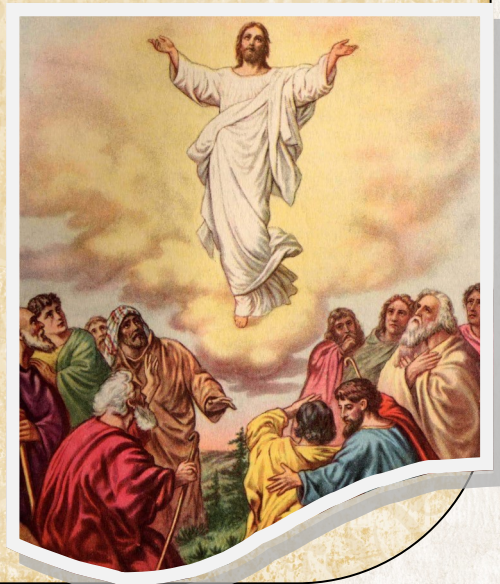
The Ascension

§

Pentecost



Ascension Thursday



The Ascension

During the forty days after His Resurrection Our Lord appeared to the Apostles in the little upper chamber, where they were hiding from the Jews. "Peace be to you," He said. "As the Father sent me, I also send you.

"When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain (not forgive), they are retained (not forgiven)." (Saint John, XX: 21-23.)

It was during those forty days, as we read in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, that Our Lord sent His Apostles forth to Christianize the world.

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Saint Matthew, XXVIII: 19-20.)

Now the time to go was at hand. Saint Luke described the beauty of the Ascension in the *Acts of the Apostles*. Once again Our Lord gathered together His Apostles and His Disciples. He spoke to them:

"And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

"And while they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments.

"Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven." (Acts I: 9-11.)

Our Lord had gone. But He did not leave us alone. He left us the Catholic Church wherein we are safe and happy and secure.

The conversion of the world is the first and greatest form of Catholic Action. We must always believe the truths and obey the commandments of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He was born for us. He died for us. He ascended into heaven where we hope to be with Him when we die.

~ Taken from: *Great Moments in Catholic History. Imprimatur 1938* ~

Someone the *Light* Shines Through

A Sermon for the Sunday in Ascension Octave

"You shall give testimony of me."

A little boy was once walking through a church with his mother. It was a beautiful day and the rays of the sun streamed through the windows and sent coloured beams of light across the floor of the church. The boy saw this and pointing up to the window asked his mother, "What is that?" The mother replied, "That is one of the saints."

Each time they came to a beam of light the child asked the same question, "What's that?" and the mother answered, "That is one of the saints."

Some time after that the same boy was in Catechism class and was asked the question, "What is a saint?" To which he answered, "A saint is someone the light shines through."

How true that is. Our Lord did say, "You are the light of the world. So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven." Did He not say in the Gospel, "You shall give testimony of Me"?

A most important Catholic duty is the giving of good example. We do this by the fearless practice of our religion. You gave a good example on your way to church this morning. You give a good example when you go to Communion. Any time you live up to your religion and show people that it really means something to you, you are giving good example. You are being someone whom the light shines through. You are giving testimony of Christ.

We never know how far good example will go. It is quite possible that some small action of ours will have a good effect even to the end of time. In the story of her life, the Little Flower tells about Sister Mary of the Eucharist. Sister Mary of the Eucharist wanted to light the candles of the other Sisters for a procession. She had no matches and, seeing the lamp which burned before the relics, she went for it. Only a weak thread of light remained on the smoking wick. It was almost ready to go out. But

she lit her candle with it and then lit the candles of all the other sisters. In that way, one small action of ours could go on and on. That is why our Lord tells us to be the light of the world. To be someone whom the light shines through.

We must make up our minds to do two things this morning. Never to give bad example and always to give good. Some boys are careless in this matter when they use indecent language. Make up your minds that no child will ever learn these things from hearing you say them. You can give bad example by going to the movies when those who see you know you were sent to go to confession. Those who have younger brothers and sisters should be careful in the example they set them. Good example always, that should be your rule. You can set an example at home. How do you expect your younger brothers and sisters to obey if you don't? You can set them good example by taking them in for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament on the way home from school. There are a thousand ways to be like the flickering flame that was used to light all the candles in the chapel. In a thousand ways, you can give testimony to Christ. You can be someone the light shines through.

~ Taken from: Sunday Morning Storyland. Imprimatur 1945 ~



The Ascension

Jesus had risen from the dead on Easter Sunday. He told the Apostles that He would stay with them for a while, but then He would have to leave them. He was going back to Heaven.

He said: "Go and teach the whole world what I have taught you. And even though you will not be able to see Me, I will be with you always, until the end of the world."

Then He told the Apostles that after He had gone, the Holy Spirit would come and stay in their souls.

One day - it was a Thursday, forty days after Easter Sunday - Jesus was standing on the top of a high mountain. His Blessed Mother was there. The Apostles were there. Many people were there listening to Jesus. While He was talking, He blessed them. Then Jesus began to go up, up, into the air. He went higher and higher. Soon they could not see Him. He went up into the clouds of Heaven.

Everyone was so surprised that even though they could not see Jesus, they still stood looking up into the sky. While they were watching, two beautiful white Angels appeared to them and said, "Why do you stand looking up into the clouds? Jesus had gone up to Heaven. He will not come back until the end of the world."

The Apostles were sad. They had tears in their eyes as they turned around to go away. They were already lonesome for Jesus and they were afraid. What were they going to do without Him?

The Blessed Mother and the Apostles went back to the Cenacle to pray. Jesus had promised them that He would send the Holy Spirit. They wondered, "When will the Holy Spirit come? And how will the Holy Spirit come?" They prayed that He would come soon.

~ Taken from: *The Catholic Mother's Helper*. 1948 ~



Word Search

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| F | J | N | E | S | U | N | D | A | Y | J | R |
| H | W | E | M | K | E | L | C | A | N | E | C |
| G | H | O | L | Y | G | H | O | S | T | Y | E |
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| D | T | O | N | G | U | E | S | E | T | H | F |
| S | H | Y | A | P | O | S | T | L | E | S | G |

Word Bank:

Ascent Jesus Apostles Sad Thursday Angels
White Clouds Sky Cenacle Heaven Holy Ghost
Sunday Pentecost Church Brave Hymn
Tongues Fire

The Ascension

Most of the time during the forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, the Blessed Virgin remained in seclusion in the Cenacle, where the Risen Lord appeared to her and spoke with her frequently. She spent more and more time in prayer and contemplation, praising and adoring God by singing verses of hymns alternately with choirs of angels and saints. But most of all, she prayed and fasted for the Apostles and disciples and for the spread of the new Church. She prayed particularly for Peter as head of the Church and for John as her adopted son.

A few days before the Ascension, the Holy Trinity said to her as she was meditating in a corner of her room:

“Beloved, ascend higher!”

Then the Eternal Father declared:

“My Daughter, I entrust and consign to you the Church founded by My only-begotten Son, the new Law of Grace which He has established in the world, and the people which He has redeemed.”

And the Holy Spirit announced:

“My Spouse, I communicate to you My Wisdom, and in your heart shall be deposited the mysteries and teachings and all that the Incarnate Word has accomplished in the world.”

And the Son said to her:

“My beloved Mother, I go to the Father, and I leave you in My stead. I charge you with the care of My Church. I commend its children and My brethren to you, as the Father has consigned them to Me.”

Then the Holy Trinity declared to the throng of adoring angels and saints:

“This is the Protectress of the Church and the Intercessor of the faithful. In her are contained all the mysteries of Our Omnipotence for the salvation of mankind. Whoever shall call upon her from his heart and obtain her intercession, shall secure for himself eternal life. What she asks of Us shall be granted.”

Hearing herself thus exalted, Mary only humbled herself the more, adoring the Most Holy Trinity and offering herself with ardent love to

work in the Church as a faithful and obedient servant of the divine will. And from that day she was endowed with the spiritual care of the Church, the Mystical Body of her divine Son, and became the loving Mother of all its children, until the end of the world.

On the evening before the Ascension, the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles and disciples assembled in the Cenacle, where the holy women had prepared a festival meal, with Mary's help. Although everyone realized that the Master would soon leave them, only His Mother knew that this was to be their last evening together on earth.

Mary stood modestly at the entrance of the large hall while Jesus blessed the bread, fish and vegetables which were distributed to the guests.

After the meal, the Saviour said to His followers:

"It is now time that as true and faithful disciples you become teachers of the Faith to all men. I am about to ascend to My Father. But I leave with you in My stead My own Mother as your Protectress, Consoler and Advocate, and as your Mother whom you are to hear and obey in all things. He who knows My Mother know Me. He who hears her hears Me. And who honours her honours Me.

"As supreme head of the Church you will have Peter, for I leave him as My Vicar, and you shall obey him as the chief High Priest."

All present were deeply moved, and many were weeping.

Early on the morning of the Saviour's last day on earth, He left the Cenacle with His eleven Apostles. Mary, the holy women, and about a hundred disciples followed them as they slowly ascended the Mount of Olives.

When all had gathered on the top of the hill, Jesus stood on a large, flat stone and spoke to them with calm affection.

Then He said a few words to His Mother. She humbly knelt at His feet and asked Him to give them all His last blessing. As they knelt, Jesus raised His right arm, and turning to the four points of the compass, He slowly and solemnly gave His blessing to the whole world.

Then the Saviour spread out His hands and directed His gaze toward Heaven. His whole body became increasingly luminous. The

wounds of His hands glistened, and those of His feet shone brightly. A dazzling multi-coloured circle of light descended from the sky and completely enveloped Him.

Lowering His eyes, He looked a last time at His Mother and His friends, who were all deeply moved in the solemn moment. It was a look that they would never forget. It was filled with the utmost kindness and tender love.

Then He slowly began to ascend into the air, leaving on the stone a distinct impression of His sacred feet. As He rose higher and higher at a somewhat slanting angle, His wounds glowed brightly and His long, white garment shimmered. While the stupefied disciples gazed after Him with intense amazement and awe, His figure with its still gleaming wounds became so small and distant that it could scarcely be distinguished, until finally a cloud took Him out of their sight. During His ascension, a mysterious shower of luminous dewdrops appeared to fall on the crowd.

After a few moments, as the light became more normal, the dazed and shaken disciples were still staring at the sky in complete silence, when suddenly they heard a strong, clear voice. Looking down at the ground again, they perceived two white-clad angels resembling young men with long hair, standing on a nearby rocky ledge, each holding a staff in his hand, like the Prophets of old. Remaining absolutely motionless, the two angels said with one voice to the crowd:

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to Heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you to Heaven, will come in the same way as you have seen Him going up to Heaven.”

The angels then vanished as rapidly as they had come, while all who were present bowed their heads and remained thus for some moments. For now, with a profound shock, they fully realized what had just happened to them: their beloved Saviour had returned to His Father in Heaven, leaving them to themselves on earth! Some of them were so grieved and heartbroken that they fell to the ground and wept disconsolately, like children. Others began to talk excitedly to one another. Often they looked up into the sky again, as if hoping to catch another glimpse of Jesus. Some were wrapt in silent thought and meditation, while others became

skeptical and acted as if they did not believe what they had seen.

Only Mary, Peter and John were calm and serene, though deeply moved. Mary spoke to John and pointed to the stone, and they saw the footprints of the Saviour in it. Many others came up and knelt there, bowing their faces down to this spot.

Then gradually their first sorrow over the sudden separation changed into profound happiness as they understood that their Redeemer was watching over them from the throne of His Father in Heaven, and as they also recalled His promise to be with them always. Therefore with great joy they quietly dispersed and returned to the city in small groups.

Later that day the disciples assembled in the Cenacle for prayer. But they could not help feeling troubled again, because they missed Jesus so keenly. They looked at one another helplessly, like lost children, until they saw how perfectly calm and confident Mary was, and they turned to her for encouragement and inspiration, remembering that Jesus had told them always to go to her when they were trouble, for she would ever be for all of them a mother and protectress.

~ Taken from: The Life of Mary As Seen by the Mystics. Imprimatur 1951 ~



Pentecost

Sunday



The Coming of the Holy Spirit

The Blessed Mother and the Apostles were praying again in the Cenacle. They had prayed for nine days. They were waiting for Jesus to send the Holy Spirit. Suddenly on the tenth day - it was a Sunday - while they were praying, they heard a strange noise. It grew louder and louder. It sounded like a big wind. It came nearer and nearer. Then, just as suddenly, it stopped and right above the head of each one was a little flame of fire.

Jesus had sent the Holy Spirit! The Apostles were very happy. They were no longer afraid. The Holy Spirit made them feel very brave. Now they could do anything for Jesus. They would work for Him. They would fight for Him. They would even die for Him.

We call this day Pentecost. It is the day that our Church was made known to the whole world. The Blessed Mother and the Apostles were to take care of the Church.

Pentecost is a happy day.

~ Taken from: The Catholic Mother's Helper. 1948 ~

The Hymn of the Brave Nuns

A Sermon for Pentecost Sunday

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send you in my name, He will teach you all things."

We should always have a tender devotion to the Holy Ghost. Many children just take Him for granted. They treat Him like something extra which is added on to the Father and the Son, as if He were a spare tire or the feather in a hat. He is much more important than that. He is equal to the Father and the Son.

The nuns of the convent of Vendee in France did not forget that the Holy Ghost is important. During the French revolution many priests and nuns were being put to death. The entire convent of nuns at Vendee were condemned to death on the guillotine. They all knew what that meant,

but not one of them showed the least sign of fear. Instead, standing close together, they lifted their voices in a sweet song. In the face of death they sang, and the song they sang was, "Come Holy Ghost." For these nuns the Holy Ghost was a real person, a tender consoling Counselor, not just an afterthought.

For a few moments let us take a look at the work of the Holy Ghost and be grateful to Him. He is like a finger of God's right hand. As a young child grows the light of reason shines forth and he begins to learn to speak. The Holy Ghost is there, fulfilling the promise to teach little ones to speak and understand. The sun rises and sets, the welcome rain falls on the parched earth, the seasons follow one another. The finger of God's right hand is there. For the purity of Mary we can thank Him. For the humanity of Christ we thank Him. For the Mass we thank Him. For preserving the Church from a million dangers we thank Him.

Are you thinking: "He has done these things for everybody, but what has He done for me alone?" You may remember sometime when you were undecided. You were bothered by having to choose what to do: to sin or not to sin, to go to Mass or to stay in bed, to skip your prayers or to say them. While you were wondering what you should do, a gentle whisper sounded deep down in your heart and you did the right thing. That whisper was the voice of the Holy Ghost

As a lesson for this week, each of you should start to get into the habit of praying to the Holy Ghost before and after you do your homework. The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son. They are the three equal persons in the one God. We should make the Holy Ghost a part of our lives, just as we do the Father and the Son. We should make Him a part of our lives just as did the nuns of the convent of Vendee who sang this hymn on their way to death:

"Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our hearts take up Thy rest.
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid
To fill the hearts which thou hast made."

~ Taken from: *Sunday Morning Storyland*. Imprimatur 1945 ~

Come Holy Ghost

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest,
And in our hearts take up Thy rest;
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made,
To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O Comforter, to Thee we cry,
Thou heavenly Gift of God Most High;
Thou Fount of life and fire of love,
And sweet anointing from above.
And sweet anointing from above.

O Holy Ghost, through Thee alone,
Know we the Father and the Son,
Be this our never changing creed,
That Thou dost from them both proceed,
That Thou dost from them both proceed.

Praise we the Father and the Son,
And Holy Spirit with them One;
And may the Son on us bestow
The gifts that from the Spirit flow,
The gifts that from the Spirit flow.

Match the Symbols and Write the Words on the Lines

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a = ☉

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Answer:

Pentecost

The Catholic feast of Pentecost, which occurs fifty days after Easter, recalls the descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the Apostles.

“And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place:

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

“And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” (Acts II:1-4)

Imagine the Apostles gathered together in a darkened room. Their divine leader had returned to heaven. They feel fearful and alone. Suddenly, there is the sound of a mighty wind. A light appears above each head. It is a tongue of fire. Their souls filled with the Holy Ghost.

Gone is their fear. Gone is their loneliness. The strength and power and presence of the Holy Ghost is within them. They rush out into the city.

The crowd stands in amazement. There are Jews from many lands: from Egypt, from the Island of Crete, from Rome, from Persia, from Mesopotamia. They speak different languages. Miraculously, they listen to the preaching of the Apostles and hear it, everyone, in his own tongue.

Saint Peter, the head of the Apostles, inspires the multitude with his words.

“Do penance,” he says, “and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Acts II:38)

Three thousand are baptized and accept the truths of Christ. Three thousand become Catholics and dwell together in common, “persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Thousands more are to become converts in the days and weeks and

months and years and centuries to follow.

This day, when the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles and when Saint Peter spoke, is Pentecost, the birthday of the Catholic Church.

~ Taken from: Great Moments in Catholic History. Imprimatur 1938 ~

Pentecost and the Early Church

During the Ascension of Christ, the Blessed Virgin underwent a marvelous mystical experience: by the will and power of Almighty God her soul was raised with her divine Son, and she was told to choose between remaining henceforth in the glory of Heaven or returning to the world to guide and assist the new Church. But when she looked down and saw the pitiful condition of the bewildered followers of Christ just after His Ascension, she was stirred by compassion for them and for all mankind, and prostrating herself before the Holy Trinity, she said:

“Eternal God, I accept this task, and for the time being I renounce the peace and the joy of Thy presence. I sacrifice it to further the love which Thou hast for men. Accept this sacrifice, my Lord, and let faith in Thee be spread, and let Thy holy Church be enlarged!”

Thus, by her own free choice and with the blessing of God, Mary returned to help in founding the Church Militant on earth.

During the next nine days before Pentecost she made an intensive retreat in the Cenacle with the Apostles, during which she prepared them for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Every day, at the request of either St. Peter or St. John, she spoke to the Twelve informally for one hour, explaining to them the great Mysteries of the Christian religion as her divine Son had taught them to her. She also prayed regularly with the Apostles and disciples, and gave them helpful instruction on mental prayer. Gradually they all realized that their departed Master had left them an ideal guide in His modest and holy Mother, and more and more they came to look upon Mary as their Mediatrix with Him and as the Consoler and Mother of His spiritual family, the Church. Now they knelt before her whenever she gave them her blessing as they left or entered

the cenacle.

Every day during this “novena” to the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were all united in heart and soul and mind, and while they prayed together their fervor and charity increased.

Early on Pentecost morning in the Cenacle, Mary urged the Apostles, disciples and holy women, who numbered about one hundred and twenty, to pray and to renew their ardor, as the hour was at hand when they were to be visited by the Spirit of God. They had often wondered anxiously just how this would occur, but now as they took their places they had complete peace of mind. St. Peter stood near one end of the hall in which the Last Supper had been celebrated, while Mary and the rest of the Apostles stood around him. Thus they remained for some time, quietly engaged in fervent prayer, with their arms crossed on their chests and their eyes closed or looking down at the ground. The disciples and holy women were praying in various other rooms in the building, which soon became filled with perfect silence.

Toward dawn, yet before sunrise, a luminous silvery cloud descended from Heaven and covered the entire city of Jerusalem, particularly Mount Sion and the Cenacle, over which an enormous mass of light seemed to condense and become transparent, like a sun throwing out its flames in all directions. Suddenly the sound of a violent wind arose, as though a cyclone were approaching from above, and the air resounded with a tremendous roaring that filled the whole house. Then this disturbance gave way to a display of light, a soft murmur, and a warm, healing breeze. From out of the cloud appeared rays which intercrossed seven times in a fiery rainbow and fell like burning drops onto the Cenacle.

At this moment the building and everything in it was flooded with a dazzling light. The Apostles and especially the Blessed Virgin seemed to be blazing with a mystical transparent luminosity. In the rapture of their ecstasy, they simultaneously raised their heads and opened their mouths, as though thirsting for heavenly grace. Then into each mouth there fell a jet of fire, a small parted tongue of live flame of varying degrees of intensity and colour, in which the Holy Spirit came to them, filling each person with divine inspiration and grace and wisdom.

In the holy Mother of God these effects were altogether supernatural. She was utterly transformed and exalted in God.

The Apostles were also filled with a marvelous increase of grace, which they were never to lose. Into all of them, according to each individual's condition, were infused the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Piety, Counsel, Fortitude and Fear. By this wonderful blessing the Twelve were transformed into truly apostolic founders and missionaries of the Church of Christ.

Similar graces were communicated proportionally to the rest of the disciples and the faithful in general. All those who had felt some compassion for the Saviour in His sufferings and death were interiorly enlightened and purified, so that they were later disposed to become Christians.

When all had received this mystical infusion from above, a holy inspiration filled the group in the Cenacle. They were stirred to the depths of their souls, and they seemed almost intoxicated with happiness and confidence. As they gathered around the Blessed Virgin, who as ever remained perfectly calm and recollected, the Apostles embraced one another, and throughout the little flock there flowed a new life and a new spirit of holy joy, faith and courage.

Then, while St. Peter and the other Apostles went out into the city and openly preached the Message of Christ with extraordinary fervor and inspiration, Mary remained in the Cenacle, prostrate on the floor, praying for the conversion of all who heard the Word of God. "And there were added that day about three thousand souls."

When the Apostles returned to the Cenacle, she welcomed them with great joy, and Peter introduced a group of the new converts to her, saying:

"My brethren, this is the Mother of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, whose Faith you have received. She bore Him, remaining a Virgin before, during, and after His birth. Receive her as your Mother and Intercessor,



for through her you and we shall receive light, guidance, and release from our sins and miseries.”

And at Peter's request the Mother of God gave them all her blessing and urged them to persevere strongly in the Faith.

~ Taken from: *The Life of Mary As Seen by the Mystics. Imprimatur 1951* ~



“And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” ~ Acts 2: 1-4