



## **SYRO MALABAR EPARCHY OF GREAT BRITAIN**

**Pastoral Letter 13**

**08/05/2021**

Relying on God's grace and protection, Mar Joseph Srampickal, Bishop of Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain, writing to all Priests, Religious and the Faithful.

### **Holy Spirit: The Lord and the Life giver**

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Yet another Solemnity of Pentecost has arrived. The Pentecost took place seven weeks after the resurrection of the Messiah. Seven weeks points to the fulfilment of the resurrection of the Messiah. It is in the fullness of the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah that the Holy Spirit, the Helper officially and visibly enters the Church. The Messiah's Passover is fulfilled with the Pentecost (ccc 731). The Messiah, the Lord, outpours the Spirit in abundance. (CCC 731).

The second specialty of Pentecost is that the Holy Trinity is fully revealed on that day. The mystery of the Holy Trinity was revealed as in a shadow in the Old Testament. The narration of creation in the book of Genesis, 'the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters '(Genesis 1:2) expresses the Holy Spirit, the source of divine life, who descends into the waters of baptism and transforms us into new creations. The Psalmist sings ' When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground '(Psalms 104:30).He speaks about the Holy Spirit as the one who renews the face of the earth after the Messiah. The prophesy of Isaiah 'A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, the Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him '(Isiah 11:1 -5), in fact depicts the shadowing presence of the Trinity that points to the economy of salvation realized through the Messiah. Jesus began his public life with the proclamation 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me '(Luke 4:18) fulfils this prophecy about the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:18).

The mystery of the Holy Trinity and the presence of the Holy Spirit, which appeared as a shadow in the Old Testament, became visible to the world in its fullness on the Solemnity of Pentecost. Man experienced the divinity, glory and power of the Spirit of God in Pentecost. After the resurrection of the Messiah, the Holy Spirit began to work powerfully on the apostles, the heirs of His priesthood and stewards of the

mysteries of God and on the Holy Church, as in Christ. Therefore, Pentecost is like the inaugural day of the Church. This work of the Holy Spirit is destined to the end of the time. That is, until the entire church, the body of the Messiah feasts in the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit of God is there to guide, teach and sanctify us. Therefore, the Church teaches us that by His unceasing coming, the Holy Spirit causes the world to enter into the 'last days '(CCC 732).

The Holy Spirit, who guides, teaches and sanctifies the Church until the end of time, had in fact begun the priestly mission in the apostles before Pentecost. For the continuation of the priestly mission, it is the Messiah our Lord who hands over the Spirit that worked in Him to the twelve who were given to Him by His Father (John 17 :6). In the Gospel of St. John, we see that before the Solemnity of Pentecost, Jesus pours out the Spirit to His apostles in order to prepare them for the priestly duty. 'And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"(John 20:22). Then He gave them the authority to forgive sins and appointed them as His ambassadors.

The Holy Spirit, who was given to the whole church on Pentecost and as a special anointing to the apostles before that, is actually the spirit of the Church given to her as her Spirit. Quoting St. Augustine, the Church teaches that, 'what the soul is to the human body, the Holy Spirit is to the Body of Christ, which is the Church '(CCC797). The Holy Spirit is given for the sole purpose of building up the Church. St. Paul also teaches that the purpose of the gifts, charisms and fruits of the Holy Spirit is to build up the Church (1 Cor 12,13,14). The Holy Spirit undertakes the task of building up the Church by the Word of God, Sacraments, Grace of the apostles, virtues and by the many special graces (CCC 798)

The Holy Spirit is given in the Church by the bishops who officiate the apostolic mission in the Holy Church and by the priests who are ordained and appointed by the bishops. In the Holy Church, the Holy Spirit is given to a person as his entitlement through the laying of hands and anointing with oil. The anointing of oil, the sacrament we call as 'Confirmation 'in Latin rite, is in fact the Solemnity of Pentecost in our life. We were also filled with the Spirit that flew down like tongues of fire once. May the power of this Spirit, the zeal of God's love and the missionary grace be always enkindled in us! I remind you lovingly not to forget that the Spirit has brought us, the members of the Syro-Malabar Church who are filled with the missionary grace of St. Thomas the Apostle, to this land of exile to witness the Messiah throughout the world.

In preparation of the Solemnity of Pentecost that is due to be celebrated on 23rd of May 2021, a prayer service is conducted daily from 7.30 to 9 pm under the leadership of the New Evangelization Commission of the Eparchy. This year, the Solemnity of Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ is on Thursday,13th of May. From that day onwards till the 22 of May from 7pm to 9 pm, grace filled preachers will lead the Pentecost Retreat. On the Solemnity of Pentecost, at 6 pm, as the Bishop of this Eparchy I will be celebrating the Holy Qurbana offering the Eparchy, all the Priests, Religious and the faithful. After the Holy Qurbana until 9 pm, there will be Eucharistic adoration. In the adoration, I consecrate every one of us to the Virgin Mary, the

Mother of Jesus, and pray through her intercession for the outpouring of the gifts, charisms and fruits of the Spirit. I cordially invite you to take part in the prayers, preaching, adoration and the Holy Qurbana in preparation of the Pentecost.

May you be filled with the grace and blessing of the Pentecost! With grateful heart, I bless you all in the grace bestowed upon me by the Lord in the Church to pour out the Holy Spirit and to take part in the Apostolic Ministry of the priesthood led by the Holy Spirit.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, Love of God the Father and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, for ever and ever, Amen.

Yours in our Lord and our God,

+ Joseph Srampickal

Mar Joseph Srampickal  
Bishop, Syro-Malabar Eparchy of Great Britain

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NB: This Pastoral letter must be read in all Syro-Malabar Parishes / Missions/ Proposed Missions in Great Britain during the celebration of the Holy Qurbana before 7th June 2021.