

PENTECOST – 23rd May 2021

WHEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH COMES, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL THE TRUTH – Commentary Biblical by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

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John 15,26-27; 16,12-15

Jesus talking to his disciples

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning

“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

On the day of Pentecost, while the Jewish community celebrated the gift of the law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, in the Christian community the Spirit descends. This episode sanctions the transition from the old to the new alliance. The believer, with Jesus, no longer obeys the law of Moses, but welcomes the Spirit which makes him capable of a love similar to that of the Father. In today's liturgy the church combines two passages from John, chapters 15 and 16, in which we are told who this Spirit is and what his action is.

Jesus says, in chapter 15 verse 26, *“But when the Helper comes...”*, who is this Helper? He is the one who is called to the rescue. So one could translate the helper as the rescuer. He has been also translated as the consoler, but not in the sense of the one who comes to comfort, but of the one who eliminates the root cause of suffering.

Jesus had already stated in the previous chapter that he would pray for this *“Helper”* *..to remain with you forever*”, this is the guarantee for the Christian community. This Spirit does not come to help in times of need, but precedes the need and remains forever. This is a guarantee of serenity that presses the community to dedicate itself to others. This Spirit is called the *“Spirit of truth”* and then later, joining with chapter 16 from verse 12, Jesus states *“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth,..”* The truth in John's Gospel is not a doctrine that one possesses, but it is a dynamic attitude of love that unites with others. For this reason Jesus does not say *“I have the truth”*, but *“I am in the truth”*, he does not authorize to possess the truth, but to be in the truth and walk in the truth. While those who have the truth can distance themselves from others, from those who do not think like him, those who are in the truth unite with everyone; this is the guarantee of this Spirit of truth.

But then here is the security, the certainty of what Jesus promises. He says “...*but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*” this is the guarantee of the topicality and survival of the church. What does it mean? The Holy Spirit, who is this power of love of God, does not repeat the things of the past, but announces future things..This means that in the dynamics of community life, in the face of new needs, old answers will never be given, answers from the past, but the Spirit, that is the community's tension towards the good of man as an absolute value will be able to make him give new answers. So new answers to new needs.

And Jesus concludes “*All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*”, what does this mean? Not a new message, but the understanding of the same in new circumstances. So there is only one message, that we know, the Gospels, the practical realization of this message is always in favour of the good of man and not of the institution, of what promotes human growth, all this is the guarantee of growth, survival and relevance of the church.