



14. May 2024

**Pentecost Novena**  
**Day 5: "The faithful"**

*On the faithful, who adore  
And confess you, evermore  
In your sevenfold gift descend;*

*Give them virtue's sure reward;  
Give them your salvation, Lord;  
Give them joys that never end.*

The faithful, the people of God... Who belongs to them? From the point of view of vocation, all human beings belong to the people of God, because He wants all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4). That is why He sent His own Son into the world to bring people home and make them His children.

But there is a crucial difference between those who accept this call and live by it and those who pass by the Lord's invitation.

Certainly, the invitation has not yet reached everyone, and much remains to be done until the Gospel message is authentically proclaimed "to every creature" (Mk 16:15). Since our Father knows every person, He knows who is deliberately closed to His call and to whom it has not yet been proclaimed, or at least not convincingly.

It is not for us to judge.

What is for us, who know the Gospel and have received the grace of being members of the Church, is for the Lord's call to bear fruit in our lives so that others may know the love of God through our witness.

If we believe and follow the Lord, we can be counted among His "faithful" and therefore the beautiful words of the Pentecost Sequence apply to us.

Trust in God is the key to getting through these difficult times. This applies both to our personal lives and to the situation of humanity in general. We are not able to overcome them on our own and often bump into our limitations. But it is precisely when we realise our limitations that the Lord invites us to turn to Him. In this way, our limitations and the obstacles along the way become instruments for us to turn wholeheartedly to the Lord and trust in His help. There is no doubt that He is always there for us. It is we who often forget this, preferring to trust in ourselves rather than taking the step of trusting in God and throwing ourselves wholeheartedly into His arms.

When we take this step of trust, we notice how the gifts of the Holy Spirit are activated in our lives. When we are down and turn to the Lord, He will lift us up with the gift of strength. Think of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane. In those difficult hours, when He received no comfort from His disciples, an angel came down from heaven and strengthened Him (Luke 22:43). When we find ourselves in situations where we are painfully aware that no one can help us and we seek comfort in vain, the Lord Himself will strengthen us if we turn to Him.

We also need the spirit of fortitude to face the trials of these times and to faithfully fulfil the task that has been entrusted to us in life. This trial especially concerns the faith, which is under attack from many fronts, both inside and outside the Church. The attacks can be very subtle and we may not recognise them as such at first. The poison of relativism can spread almost unnoticed, even within our Holy Church, corroding faith and morals. If those who are called to be shepherds are not vigilant - or, in the worst case, are even collaborating in the destruction - then we must take refuge in the Lord and arm ourselves with the appropriate weapons for the inevitable battle: the defence of our Holy Faith.

In everything we must be focused on the Lord. We must never forget that this world is not our eternal home, but the place where we must prove our faithfulness. Therefore, our efforts should be focused not on settling down in this life, but on attaining eternal life. This wise approach will teach us to live our lives and our Christian vocation with great responsibility. St Paul puts it very well: *“one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 3:13c-14).

The joy of the eternal life that God offers us can give us the wings to face and overcome earthly difficulties more easily, because love makes everything more bearable. In this way, the vision of what awaits us in eternity is not simply something that is far away and that we will reach sometime, but it permeates our earthly existence as a source of joy and also of prudence. Indeed, Scripture exhorts us: *"In all you do, remember the end of your life, and then you will never sin"* (Sir 7:36).

But even stronger than the virtue of prudence is the fire of love and the ardent desire for God, our Father. It was this that moved St Paul to do everything that was given to him: *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us"* (Rom 8:18). With these words He comforts us in those moments when the crosses of life come upon us.

The wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit will give us in all situations of life what God's goodness has prepared for us. When they blossom in our lives, others who do not yet know the faith will also be able to recognise our witness. In this way we will be able to contribute to inviting people to turn to the Father and find salvation in Jesus Christ.