



15. May 2024

**Pentecost Novena**  
**Day 6: "The Holy Spirit and Mary"**

If the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost marks the hour of the birth of the Church, then His descent upon Mary in Nazareth marks the beginning of the work of salvation (cf. Lk 1:35).

The Church teaches us that Mary was preserved from original sin in view of the Saviour who would be born of her. This is the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: that the Virgin Mary, by a special grace of God, preserved the state of paradisiacal innocence. In this way we can discover how the Holy Spirit filled her and how she received Him with all the openness of her being, which was her indispensable contribution for this supernatural union to take place. There was no obstacle between Mary and the Holy Spirit, no reservations, no barriers of sin, no resistance, only receptivity and total self-giving. In this way Mary was able to conceive the Incarnate Word, whom the Holy Spirit conceived within her.

Although this event was unique, it also shows us Mary as the image and model of the Church and the image of our soul in its original state of purity. The Church must become as open and receptive to the Holy Spirit as Our Lady was, for Jesus wishes to continue to proclaim His Word through the Church and to be present in her through the sacraments.

The extent to which the Church is led by the Holy Spirit will depend on her purity and receptivity. Therefore, the Church must enter into the spiritual school of the one who is her model, she must become "Marian", just as our soul must become "Marian".

This spiritual school of Mary, whom Jesus gave us as our Mother on the Cross, is that she, together with the Holy Spirit, will help us to overcome all the barriers and obstacles that oppose the Spirit, so that we become receptive as she was.

At this point we can pause to meditate on Mary's title of "Bride of the Holy Spirit". Apart from the external aspect which makes Mary the Bride of the Holy Spirit through the Incarnation of the Word, there is also an internal meaning, in terms of Mary's

maximum receptivity and sensitivity towards her heavenly Bridegroom. If, even on the human level, we see that a bride aflame with love is focused with every fibre of her being on her Bridegroom, how much more is the Mother of God focused on her heavenly Bridegroom, the Holy Spirit!

This concentration is manifested in Mary's loving obedience to the angel's announcement, in her readiness to do God's will as His handmaid, in her following of her Son, in her "yes" to the way of suffering to the foot of the Cross.

How much the gifts of the Holy Spirit unfolded in the Virgin Mary! She became the pillar of the newborn Church.

What distinguishes Mary is her loving obedience, which is the sign of a soul in deep union with the Holy Spirit. God's will is always the supreme good because it comes from the most loving heart of God. It is the Holy Spirit who makes us conform to God's will. In the case of the Mother of our Lord, it was not necessary for her to overcome the consequences of original sin, nor did she have to free her heart from the chains of selfishness. In us, however, it is necessary to overcome all these obstacles before we can be united with God.

But our Heavenly Host does not shun us as long as we are willing to allow ourselves to be purified by His love. Each time we accept His guidance, the light penetrates deeper into us and our soul is cleansed of the stains that make it unpleasant. Just as in the Gospel the Lord cleanses the lepers of their disease, so the Holy Spirit strives to restore the soul to its original beauty. In this way it becomes more and more like Mary's most pure soul. In a mystical dimension, it can even become the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

The more our life becomes transparent to the will of God, the more we will become "other Christs". In other words, the Head will be more and more united with the members and will be able to reflect itself more and more perfectly in them. In a soul filled with the Holy Spirit, Our Lady's words become the motto that marks the whole of life: *"You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said"* (Lk 1:38). The goal, then, is to reach perfect union with the will of God.

If we aspire to the perfect obedience of love towards our Father and if we want to live in deep intimacy with the Holy Spirit, an eminent advice is to entrust ourselves especially to the Mother of our Lord.

If we have said that the Holy Spirit does not shy away from the stains He finds in a soul, but begins to purify it, how much greater will be His joy when He can work in a soul already purified and help it to fully fulfil the mission the Lord has entrusted to it on earth!