

18. May 2024

Pentecost Novena
Day 9: “The Bridegroom of souls”

If in the previous meditations we have come to know and love the Holy Spirit as the Friend and Keeper of our souls, today we want to contemplate Him as the Bridegroom of our souls.

All expressions of love in the human sphere have their starting point in God Himself. So we can make this beautiful comparison by considering the Holy Spirit as the Bridegroom who is courting our soul.

When we spoke of friendship with the Holy Spirit, we had stressed the intimacy of the relationship and its benevolent closeness. In describing Him as the "keeper of our souls", we focused primarily on His watchful care for the integrity and fruitfulness of our walk with the Lord, and the protection with which He surrounds our soul.

Now, when we contemplate Him as the Bridegroom of our souls, the focus is on love. Both the Virgin Mary and the Church are called the "Bride of the Holy Spirit". Thus, through reflection and contemplation, we can penetrate ever deeper into this mystery.

But we can also speak of a betrothal in relation to our soul, and thus of the Holy Spirit as the divine Bridegroom. Indeed, the Holy Spirit courts our soul with the most tender expressions of His love, drawing her to Himself and showing her His beauty. But before consummating the union of love with the soul, He leads her to her Redeemer, so that she may be freed from her faults and purified by the Blood of the Lamb. Only if the soul lives in a state of grace can the Holy Spirit penetrate her and make her receptive to His presence.

The signs of love that the Holy Spirit gives to the soul on the path of union are of a profound gentleness and tenderness, because the Spirit of the Lord knows very well how sensitive the soul is. Created for love, she is on the one hand receptive to love and on the other hand very vulnerable when she does not find true love. Thus the gentleness of the Holy Spirit makes it easy for the soul to open herself to His love.

Not infrequently the Divine Spouse encounters wounded souls, because life in this world is definitely not like paradise, and unfortunately love does not always reign in people's lives. For this reason, the Holy Spirit resorts to the utmost tenderness in order not to frighten the soul and to surround her with His sweetness.

As the Bridegroom of the soul, He seeks her especially through a spiritual embrace and His warm closeness, because He wants her inmost being, He wants her heart, to win it for the love of God. The soul must be awakened to love to the point of longing for nothing else but to be united with her divine Spouse. He looks at her with eyes of love, embellishes her with His gifts and makes her blossom by the power of His divine love.

Though the Holy Spirit is patient and willing to call the soul again and again when she is still disfigured by the ugliness of sin, He certainly does not want to leave her in that wretched state. He wants a beautiful bride, adorned with “gold-woven robes” (cf. Ps 44:14-15), radiant in all the grace that makes her irresistible to Him.

It is an inexpressible joy for the divine Bridegroom when the soul awakens from her lethargy and now rushes with Him to fulfil the will of the heavenly Father. How the divine Bridegroom will rejoice when He has found the soul, because now she belongs to Him and glorifies God!

And the bride? She no longer needs to search for her Bridegroom. She has found Him, and now she can celebrate the feast of love forever in the heavenly gardens. She is betrothed to Him forever!

What a tender, strong and fruitful love begins to unfold! The Bridegroom will never tire of entertaining His Bride, of showing her His love in a thousand ways, of leading her ever deeper into the mysteries of divine love.

And the Bride? She will never tire of responding to that love, and will blossom more and more in the beauty and dignity that God has given her. She has found the love of her life. Where else would she go? He is her lover!