



Archbishop of Montreal

Homily
Thursday, May 21, 2020

Sixth Week of Easter Day (Jn 16, 16-20)

How can we pray in preparation for Pentecost?

Today, Thursday, is 40 days after Easter. This means that the universal Church celebrates the Feast of the Ascension of Jesus. But in some countries, including in Canada, the feast day is postponed to Sunday to make its celebration easier for the faithful. For this reason, our celebration of the Feast of the Ascension will be not today but on Sunday.

The event of the Ascension of Jesus stands between Easter and Pentecost. After Easter, after the death and resurrection of Christ, Jesus appears to his apostles and disciples to comfort them and strengthen them in faith. Yet while He comforts them in faith, Jesus' appearances to his apostles and disciples prepare them for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

After the Ascension, therefore, our gaze turns towards the celebration of Pentecost. When the Ascension is celebrated on its traditional day, then the feast is followed by a novena prayed in preparation for Pentecost. It is a novena to prepare for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, the church's tradition throughout history invites us to make this a truly special time of prayer in preparation for Pentecost. How do we do so?

By doing what the apostles and disciples were doing on the day of Pentecost: They were in the Upper Room, the Cenacle. They persevered in prayer, and Mary was with them and they were with Mary. In the Upper Room were Mary, the apostles along with the male and female disciples. And in this prayer with Mary, they were preparing themselves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Now I invite you, wherever you are, in your parishes, in your dioceses and in your religious movements and associations to think about preparing yourselves. Remember here, that the apostles were not preparing themselves individually for the gift of the Holy Spirit!

They were preparing themselves together with others, and with Mary, to receive the Holy Spirit. We, too we can gather as a family, as a few families, as a few people in a group or in an ecclesial movement. We, too, can gather to pray together, with Mary, to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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themselves individually for the gift of the Holy Spirit! They were preparing themselves together with others, and with Mary.

A straightforward way to do so is to pray the Rosary daily. The novena begins tomorrow, Friday. Pray the Rosary from tomorrow until Saturday, the day before Pentecost. To pray the Rosary is to pray with Mary in the Upper Room with the intention of opening ourselves more to the gift of the Holy Spirit. We welcome the breath of the Holy Spirit that renews in us the sense of mission, the strength of mission, and the spirit of mission to witness to Jesus Christ in the world today.

Let us begin now to take this time, that is given to us, to pray a novena to the Holy Spirit, with Mary, in the Upper Room.

+ Christian Lépine

† Christian Lépine
Archbishop of Montreal