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- <sup>26</sup> “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.
- <sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.
- <sup>16:8</sup> And when He comes, He will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement:
- <sup>9</sup> concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;
- <sup>10</sup> concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see Me no longer;
- <sup>11</sup> concerning judgement, because the ruler of this world is judged.
- <sup>13</sup> 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.
- John 15:26-27, 16:8-11,13 (NRSV)

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Today we celebrate an important ‘Festival’ in the life of ‘the church’, that is ‘Pentecost’. Pentecost was originally a Harvest Festival for the Jewish people, coming at the end of Harvest. It was also a time people celebrated and remembered God giving His Law.

We all know ‘memory’ is important. Memory is something we deal with every moment of the day, even when it seems like we’re not actively using it. When one types on a keyboard, one uses their memory of the keyboard to type the words. The brain focuses on the content, but while we are doing that, we also remember what keys to hit in order to make words appear on the screen.

Memory plays a big role in our life. It allows us to remember skills that we’ve learned, or retrieve information that is stored in the brain, or recall a precious moment that occurred in the past. Memory also organizes information so that when we retrieve it, we can apply that information in the proper context and use it in the current activity we are involved in.

Memorisation is discipline for the mind, training the mind to focus and be industrious. You can’t always “Google it.” Sometimes you don’t have access to the Internet. Memorisation creates the repertoire of what we think about. Nobody can think in a vacuum of information. To be an expert in any field requires knowledge. Understanding is nourished by the information you hold in working memory as you think. And the exercise of memory develops learning. History documents that great minds are filled with knowledge. Jesus had to know scripture in order to show Pharisees what was wrong with their practice of it. Picasso had to know how to paint before he decided what to paint. Einstein had to know the physics literature of his day before he could realise its errors.

There are some who say that ‘the church’ has not always ‘remembered the person and work of the Holy Spirit’. Amongst some church groups a story is told of a ‘revival meeting’ that took place in Azusa Street Los Angeles. These gatherings were characterised by experiences accompanied with testimonies of physical

healing miracles and 'speaking in tongues'. Today, the revival is considered by historians to be the primary catalyst for the spread of Pentecostalism in the 20th century. And because of this talk of 'revival' a comment is often made that 'mainstream churches' have 'forgotten about the Holy Spirit. But note the many hymns in your hymnbook that are prayers addressed to the Holy Spirit. Note the ancient Litany to the Holy Spirit (that follows this message). Note the words in prayers and songs of the church. Often we speak to the Holy Spirit, praying for His guiding and blessing. But we may not always remember this...

The Spirit's is at work in "you". Earlier Jesus had said, "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. (15:3); I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing. (15:5); You are my friends if you do what I command you. (15:14); You did not choose Me but I chose you. And I appointed you so that you would go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. (15:16)" This is what the Spirit does for those who are believers. The Spirit is at work in you, reminding you that you do not face the future alone (cf. 14:18)...

The Spirit will 'guide you'. The word for "guide" is *hodegeo*, a compound word from *hodos*= way, road; and *ago*= to lead. So literally it means "lead in the way." Jesus said John 15:27-27: "When the Counsellor comes, the Holy Spirit, The Advocate, whom I shall send from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to me." This is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is at work in you. This Spirit will testify, give evidence and witness to the words and wisdom of Jesus Christ, His miracles and parables, His Good Friday and Easter. This Spirit of truth leads us to listen to Jesus in the word so that we may know God. The Spirit guides us into truth of Christ who is the mind and heart of God.

In our Scriptures this day we hear our Lord Jesus say, "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." The Spirit is also describes by Jesus as "the Helper" (Παράκλητος – 'paraclete' – counsellor, comforter, guide, advocate...).

Jesus also says that the work of the Spirit is 'conviction/convincing'... The word Jesus uses is *elenxei* (Greek ἐλέγξει), sometimes translated "convince" and sometimes "convict". No one word can translate it adequately. It is used for the cross-examination of a witness, or a person on trial, or an opponent in an argument. It has always this idea of cross-examining until a person sees and admits errors, or acknowledges the force of some argument which is not yet seen. In some instance, it is by for the action of conscience on a person's mind and heart. Clearly such cross-examination can do two things--it can convict a person of a crime they have committed or the wrong has done; or it can convince a person of the weakness of their case and the strength of the case which is opposed. In this passage we need both meanings, both convict and convince.

Jesus says the Holy Spirit will:

(i) convict people of sin. When the Jews crucified Jesus, they did not believe that they were sinning; they believed that they were serving God. But when the story

of that crucifixion was later preached, they were cut to their heart (Acts 2:37). They suddenly had the terrible conviction that the crucifixion was the greatest crime in history and that their sin had caused it. What is it that gives a person a true and proper sense of sin? Why should the sight of a man crucified as a criminal in Palestine two thousand years ago tear the hearts of people open throughout the centuries and still today? It is the work of the Holy Spirit...

- (ii) The Holy Spirit will convince people of righteousness. It becomes clear what this means when we see that it is Jesus Christ's righteousness of which people will be convinced. It is the work of the Holy Spirit who convinces people of the sheer righteousness of Christ, backed by the fact that Jesus rose again.
- (iii) The Holy Spirit convinces people of judgment. On the Cross evil stands condemned and defeated. What makes a person feel certain that judgment lies ahead? It is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is He who gives us the inner and unshakable conviction that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

We also may note that when we are convicted/convinced of our own sin, when we are convinced of Christ's righteousness, when we are convinced of judgment to come, it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the certainty that in the Cross of Christ is our salvation and that with Christ we are forgiven, and saved from judgment. It is the Spirit who convinces us and makes us sure that in this crucified figure we can find our Saviour and our Lord.

The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and convinces us of our Saviour. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth, whose great work is to bring God's truth to people.

When Jesus says he is going away, going to the Father, He says that He will send them "another Helper." Did you catch that? "Another" Helper. Well, if the Holy Spirit is going to be "another" Helper, another Paraclete, then who was the first one? Why, it was Jesus Himself. He had been a Paraclete, a Helper walking alongside the disciples, for the past few years. And think of it: Jesus had been that for them, going with them, helping them, teaching them, guiding them, all of that—that is what Jesus had meant to the disciples during their time together. So now when Jesus says that he is going away, but that he will send them "another" Helper, Jesus is saying that that is how the Holy Spirit will help them, in other words, like Jesus did.

So it was for the disciples. And so it is and will be for us also. The Holy Spirit is with us. The Holy Spirit will go with us, throughout our lives, to keep us in the Christian faith, to guard and guide us, to sanctify us and help us grow as Christians. The Holy Spirit, whom Christ poured out on the church on the Day of Pentecost—the Holy Spirit was given to each one of us on the day of our baptism. The Holy Spirit wants people to look upon Jesus and be saved.

The Holy Spirit is at work in you. I've heard this comparison made: It's like your car is out somewhere in a big parking lot at the shopping centre. But it's night, it's dark out, and you don't know where to find it. So somebody comes alongside you, with a flashlight, and leads you to your car, shining the light so you see the car, but you don't notice the person holding the flashlight. That's kind of how it is with the Holy Spirit. We don't notice Him much, but all the while He's pointing the flashlight at Jesus, so we can see our Saviour. It's like we say in the Catechism: "I believe that I

cannot by my own reason strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel.”

The comfort of the Holy Spirit doesn't come from you—it doesn't come from looking inside of you. That's a false comfort. Today we celebrate and rejoice that Christ has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He is our Helper, the Spirit is. The Holy Spirit will go alongside us. He will glorify Jesus. And He will guide us into all the truth. The comfort of the Holy Spirit points you to Jesus. What a wonderful gift. Amen.

## LITANY TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Lord, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

O Christ, hear us.

**Christ, graciously hear us.**

O God the Father in heaven:

**Have mercy on us.**

O God the Son, redeemer of the world:

**Have mercy on us.**

O God the Holy Spirit, comforter and sanctifier:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of wisdom and understanding:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of counsel and might:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of knowledge and godliness:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of the fear of the Lord:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of love, joy, and peace:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of, patience, kindness, and generosity:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control:

**Have mercy on us.**

O Spirit of adoption as the children of God:

**Have mercy on us.**

From all sin and from all evil:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

From the crafts and attacks of Satan:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

From uncleanness of mind or body:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your eternal procession from the Father and the Son:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your working at creation:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your inspiration of the prophets:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your descent upon the mother of our Lord at His incarnation:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your descent upon our Lord at His baptism:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your descent upon the apostles at Pentecost:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your continual presence with the church:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

By Your grace and pity in the day of judgment:

**O Holy Spirit, deliver us.**

That You would shine Your light and love into our hearts:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would open to us the treasures of Your grace:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would teach us to pray according to Your will:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would teach us to pray, and also pray within us:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That we may not grieve You or despise You:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That we may remember that our bodies are Your temple  
and be careful not to defile them:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would guide and direct all young people:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would heal the divisions between families:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would heal the sick:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would reconcile all people to one another:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would lead us into all truth:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would grant Your unity to the church:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

That You would grant Your peace to the whole world:

**O Holy Spirit, hear us.**

O Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world :

**Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us.**

O Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world :

**Send down Your Holy Spirit on us.**

O Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world :

**Grant us Your Holy Spirit of peace.**

O Christ, hear us :

**Christ, graciously hear us.**

O Spirit of the living God,  
breathe into our lives, and renew and transform us,  
so that we may serve our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Father,  
one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**