

PENTECOST

It was in 2005 that John Paul II died. I don't know if any of you remember the coverage of his funeral. Perhaps some of you were there. I remember watching it. Here are some interesting facts:

- More than three thousand foreign journalists descended upon Rome as John Paul II was dying.
- During the week before the funeral, 2 million pilgrims paid their last respects in person to the pope as he lay in state. Some of them waited in line for 24 hours to do so.
- On the night before the funeral, more than 800,000 pilgrims spent the night praying and waiting in the streets and plazas of Rome. Most of these were young people who had come from five continents.
- All night long you could see them waiting in line for confession at makeshift, outdoor confessionals that Rome's priests had set up on doorsteps and under lamp posts.
- The funeral itself was followed by millions via television and radio.
- The amount of world leaders who actually came to be physically present was extraordinary.
- It included four queens, five kings, several presidents, seventy prime ministers or heads of government and more than 100 other recognized dignitaries.
- Dozens of Orthodox, Protestant and Jewish leaders joined them.

One cannot help but see or feel the connection to the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the upper room in Jerusalem. We hear of amazement and astonishment. There were large crowds present, people from every nation, all speaking and understanding the many languages spoken. There was a peace and excitement in the air.

We know the apostles will become changed men, proclaiming the message of Christ with conviction and courage. No one will deny Him again, instead, most will go to their deaths never once turning their backs on Him.

What changed in that instant? What brought the world together for even a short time; then and in 2005? What gave the apostles immense courage? We know it was the Holy Spirit.

But could it be true, that what Bishop Luis Martinez (a foremost author and scholar on the Holy Spirit today) says, when he points out that the Holy Spirit is more forgotten, that he must be given his proper place in the Christian life.

My relationship with the Holy Spirit was really brought to light to me recently when I was in adoration. I have a book I have been praying with. The author is identified only as a Benedictine Monk. The book is centered around the monk's conversations with Jesus and sometimes Mary during his time in adoration. He writes that on Friday March 28, 2008 Jesus said to him: "Trust in the guidance of the One whom I have sent to befriend you, the Holy Spirit, your Advocate. Learn to listen to His

gentle leading. The more you follow Him, the more will you understand where and how He is leading you. **This is the secret of holiness: to be led by the Holy Spirit actively.** Call upon Him, for He is, at every moment, available to you. He dwells with Me and with My Father in the sanctuary of your soul. He is your Advocate against the world, the flesh, and the evil one, the accuser. He is your Advocate with My Father.”

As I sat there after reading this, it hit me hard, He the Holy Spirit had been the forgotten one in my life. Even though He was working in my life, walking beside me as my advocate, I hardly ever engaged Him in prayer, conversation, or worship. I seldom consciously sought His guidance. I seldom stopped to listen to Him or let Him lead me.

Could it be true that for so long, the one who John Paul II writes about as being the one giver of gifts, the light of hearts, who brings rest and ease in the midst of the anxieties, could it be true I was not actively seeking Him or letting Him guide me? It was true, at least for me.

If it is true for you too, let us all cry out like the Psalmist in Psalm 51: A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit.

Let us actively seek Him out every day, let us listen for Him, pray to Him. Let's not be the ones to forget Him. As Jesus said to the Benedictine monk: call upon Him, for He is, at every moment, available to you.