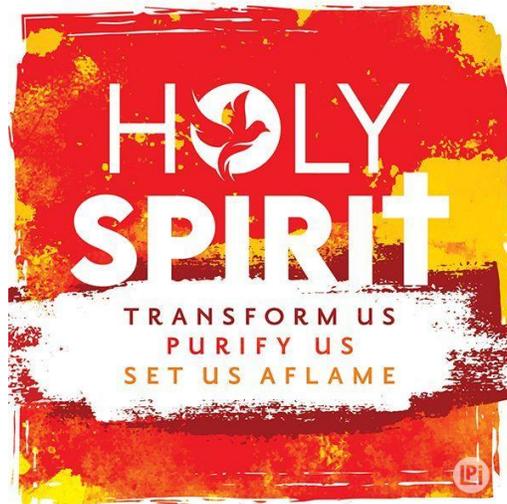


The Holy Spirit's Fire Transforms Us Forever



For Sunday, May 28, 2023
Pentecost Sunday

Once the Holy Spirit transforms us, we are free to proclaim the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection of Jesus.

One of the most powerful symbols used to describe the Holy Spirit is fire. It is the reason why we wear red on Pentecost. By depicting the Holy Spirit as fire, the Scriptures teach us about the effects that he has on the lives of believers. Like fire, the Holy Spirit transforms us, purifies us, and sets us aflame with love of God.

The Holy Spirit transforms us. Fire changes whatever it touches. Once something is burned, it cannot return to what it was. Just so, once we are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit through baptism and confirmation, we are forever changed. We cannot undo baptism or confirmation. No matter how hard we may try to reject that gift of faith and grace, it is forever with us. Just as we write our names on the cover of a book we love, just so each of us has been marked by God as his special possession. So, we can go before God with confidence knowing that He will hear us. And if we find in our hearts something that must

change, all we need to do is ask the Holy Spirit and there is no doubt we will be forever transformed by his fire.

The Holy Spirit purifies us. Just as we boil water to kill the bacteria in it, so the Holy Spirit's presence in our souls burns away all that is not of God. The fire of God's Spirit melts our sinful self away by giving us a love for God which makes anything that offends Him loathsome to us. This image of purifying fire also reminds us that our transformation involves some pain. We resist change and cling to our sinful habits. But as we surrender to the Holy Spirit's purifying power, we discover the peace, joy, and love that emerge once our sin is burned away.

Finally, the Holy Spirit sets us aflame with love for God. When we have an intense love for someone, we sometimes say we are "on fire" for that person. Or if we want something badly enough, we will say we have a "burning desire" for it. Just so, the Holy Spirit gives us a love of God that is intense and all consuming. It is the love which empowered Jesus to hand his life over for our salvation. It is the love that compelled the apostles to witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the love which today inspires people to leave their comfortable lives to serve the needy. If we are feeling dead inside, we need to give our hearts over to the presence and action of the Holy Spirit. We will find that our hearts are so engulfed with God and His love that there will not be enough hours in the day to proclaim His wonders and sing His praises.

God's saving work is not finished with the cross and resurrection. Rather He invites us to enter into the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection by making our lives an offering to Him. He desires that each of us also share in the joy of bringing His saving word to others. The gift of the Holy Spirit which has forever marked us as God's sons and daughters empowers us to do just that. He is continually at work within us to transform us, purify us and set us on fire with love. It is ours

for the asking. But watch out — there is no telling what wonders the Lord will work in our lives.

—*Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.*

PRAYER

*Holy Spirit of God,
You are the love of the Father poured into our hearts
Touch us with your fire
So that we can be made new.
Purify us of all that is not holy,
And set us on fire with love
So that our whole world can be set ablaze
With love for You and love for one another.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*