Library Signpost

Tongues Of Fire

By Rev. Benedict Ehemann

Whenever I speak about the Holy Ghost, I cannot help noticing a very special tension of interest in the faces of my listeners, different from what you see there at any other time, except when they are being taught about Heaven. To me there is something very wonderful about that, something to make one reverent and humble, some feeling of that pulse which the Holy Ghost causes to beat in the Christian soul.

To celebrate Pentecost with jubilee in this column, I will devote the space to a few excerpts and quotations from what gifted disciples of the Holy Spirit have written in His praise.

At the beginning of the joyful procession I will place Pope Leo XIII, whose magnificent Encyclical on the Holy Spirit (May 9, 1897) is a trumpet call awakening the modern world to the reality of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The whole precious document should be read by Catholics who are concerned not only to know their faith but to experience it deeply. He sounds a warning to those of us who forget about the Holy Spirit, while we fervently perform a round of minor devotions and bemoans the fact that many Catholics are

> "wrapped in error and ignorance as to the benefits and graces that have always flowed and still flow from this Divine Source— error and ignorance, indeed, unbefitting the children of light."

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"The gentle air, the brooding dove, the parted tongues of fire these symbols intimate to us how sweetly lovable must be this Best Gift of the Father and the Son. And then the offices appropriated to Him as most in harmony with His personal character—to sanctify the human soul, to inspire the patriarchs with longing for the Messias' coming, to pour sweet strains of music into psalmist-souls, and illumine the prophets with the gleam of a light never seen upon earth—these, and the espousing of Mary, and the forming of the body of Jesus, and His baptism, and the consecrating of the Apostles, all indicate how greatly our love and worship would increase did we but know the Third Person of the Godhead better. For all the precious graces that come in the Sacraments are His Gift, and all the sweetness and strength and comfort infused in prayer, and every good deed of all the millions of priests He has anointed with His holy unction since the world began—all these are His work, too.

"So out from the obscurity breaks a glimmering of the loveliness of that Divine Comforter Whose advent it was expedient we should purchase even at the cost of Christ's departure. Surely devotion to Him will bring some new nobility into our sordidly selfish lives.—Fr. Joseph McSorley, C.S.P.

"This day earth has become heaven for we are not by that alone descending from the heaven to earth, but by the Apostles ascending to heaven through the grace of the Holy Spirit which has been poured out abundantly and has transformed the whole world into heaven; and by the changing of nature but by the correcting of will. For it found a persecutor and transformed him into an evangelist; it found a persecutor and made him an apostle; it found a robber and conducted him into paradise; it found a prostitute and rendered her equal to virgins; it found the learned and showed them the Gospels; it had malice and wrought kindness; it abolished slavery and wrought liberty; it forgave debts and conferred the grace of God. Therefore heaven has become earth; and from repeating this again and again I shall not cease."—St. John Chrysostom.

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"The Woman sings
of Water and of the Spirit:
'That which ever-bowed the past
in the cool of Ships;
That which looked at school pond
and beyond saw the Tiber,
saw the Niger, and the Nile
mile on mile, bordered
with felukis, and fabulus,
quietly sailing.
That which thought: "Fruit and corn,
man, and beasts, every hour,
by power of the element of water
kept in being." And, so seeing,
chose that water be outpoured from Broken Side,
and did speed to our need girt in water;
lustral water as to flesh: as to soul
Spirit-flowing, making whole;
Spirit sheathed and caused in white
of the water, of the light.'"

—Violet Clifton

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The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed . . . Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

—Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

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EDITORIALS

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founded merely on the laying down of arms, but on restoration of what has been taken away from men with a guarantee of justice and equal opportunity for all. He asks us to pray that peace may come to this sad world. Prayer and the confidence that God will hear our prayers, is the surest means of preparing for a peace based on justice, on respect for the rights of man, a peace that will be lasting and effective.

Amid the horrors of war and the bitterness of armed conflict, it is a privilege to listen to the word of the Man of Peace, the Voice of Christ, pointing the way for all to a better day when God's will shall prevail.

VISITING OUR SCHOOLS

The school is near to us, and yet far from us. We send the little ones out day after day to their studies and training. We know the name of the Sister that teaches them. We get the monthly report that helps us to know how the pupil is progressing. We may on special occasion be asked to see the Sister or the Principal when a crisis has arisen in the study program or the behaviour pattern of our darlings. But we lack complete knowledge of the school and its activities and accomplishments.

Visitation Week in our schools will help to correct this undesirable condition. It will enable us to see at first hand the demonstration of the classroom and the school, in all its complexity of subjects, tasks, projects, activities. It will bring us close to the Sister in our boy's grade, not in any emergency contact, but just as two people very much interested in the same thing, his success as a scholar. Sister and parent have so much in common, need each other so much, that such a meeting should be productive of great good.

An hour or two spent in visitation is bound to send us home with clearer concepts of school life, with a better understanding of the Sister and her problems, and with a fuller appreciation of the fine points of our own scholars. Boards filled with arithmetic, walls gay with artistic drawings and paintings, snappy compositions in writing too good for our family, excellent examination papers in geography, history, Catechism,—plenty, indeed, to keep us busy for some time.

Our schools are worthy of all praise for their efficiency and their accomplishments. Parents and parishioners in general have reason to be proud of them. The religious spirit gives the crowning glory to each classroom in which God's children are trained thoroughly in the knowledge of God's works and in the knowledge of God Himself. One of our prized privileges as Americans is an opportunity to build and maintain the parochial school in which our children are trained to be good citizens of America and worthy children of God.

HE WILL TEACH YOU ALL THINGS

This was to be the principal work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, to teach all things to its members. The Holy Spirit was not to give any new body of teaching to the Church, different from that which Christ had given. God's teaching is always one. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God, came to earth and became man, that He might make known to man all the revelation of Almighty God. He went about for three years teaching His doctrine to the people wherever He found them; to His Apostles day after day.

To His Apostles Christ gave His complete revelation. They were to go into the world to teach men all things whatsoever He had commanded them. So important was it that nothing should be taken away, nothing added, to this deposit of faith, that Christ was not willing to trust to the merely human powers of the Apostles. They might if left to themselves, forget some parts of His teaching, might make some mistakes in adding their own thoughts to His declarations.

To give the surest guarantee that the Faith of Christ in all its parts should be preserved always in His Church, Christ sent the Holy Ghost to "teach them all things", to be a preserving constant influence to keep vividly in their minds all that Christ had taught them.

Other organizations have risen and fallen; the Church of Christ alone remains always. Divine in origin, divine in her teaching, blessed with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, She stands unique in the world as God's means of bringing to men the doctrines of salvation.

QUERIES and REPLIES

What Does Your Church Teach About The Condition Of Adam And Eve In Paradise?

We will let the great St. Augustine answer this question. "Man," says he, "lived in Paradise as he pleased, so long as his pleasure lay in what God had ordered. He lived in the enjoyment of God, the source of all the good there is in man. He lived free from want. Food was at hand lest he should hunger: drink lest he should thirst: the tree of life lest old age should undo him. His senses and feelings were undisturbed by bodily decay; he feared no disease from within, no assault from without. In his flesh he was perfect health; in his soul, perfect peace.

"No sadness was his, no mere empty pleasure. A steady tide of unceasing joy flowed out to him from God, whom he loved with the glowing love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a faith undimmed by falsehood. Man and wife were there, one in mutual trust, one in honorable love, one in the guard they kept over mind and body, one in the easy service of obedience to God's command" (City of God, B. 14, c. 26).—From the pen of Father Richard Felix, O.S.B., Defenders of the Faith, Conception, Missouri.

Feast Days

Sunday, May 24.—PENTECOST SUNDAY.
Monday, May 25.—ST. GREGORY VII.
Tuesday, May 26.—ST. PHILIP NERI.
Wednesday, May 27.—ST. BEDE.
Thursday, May 28.—ST. AUGUSTINE.
Friday, May 29.—ST. MARY MAGDALENE.
Saturday, May 30.—ST. JOAN OF ARC.

Add Inconsistencies: Strongly urging maintaining of the family as a unit while calling for mothers to leave their homes for army duty.

The Second Annunciation

What is this stir in Heaven's highest court,
Where peace doth ever hold supremest sway?
The Blessed near the great eternal throne
Gaze spellbound, low in adoration bowed,
A joyful thrill of happy expectation
Pervades the empire celestial as they see
Heaven's chosen messenger, great Gabriel,
Go forth to execute his Lord's command,—
Some fruitful errand promising new joy
To all who dwell in great Jehovah's realms.
Down to unconscious earth the Angel speeds,
Wafted on glittering pinions through the air,
His face aglow with holy exultation,
As on he journeys to fulfill his mission.

Aurora's rosy finger have not yet
Tinted the plains beneath, for sombre clouds
Over the grey earth hover. All is calm
And peaceful there as holy meditation.
Hither the Angel wings his silent way;
His course directs to yonder sleeping town,
The City of the Cross,—Jerusalem.

Within a lowly cottage in the valley
There kneels a figure motionless in prayer
Not now a maiden young and sorrow-free
But more mature, with richer, fuller charms;
From out whose heaven-directed eyes there gleams
The peerless beauty of a virgin soul,
The bitter sorrow which has pierced her heart
No other mortal being e'er should know;
And yet she prays with rapt, untiring ardor
For mercy toward the wanderers of His flock.

And now the air is redolent with perfume,
And all the chamber filled with light celestial,—
A light, than Heaven's sun itself more brilliant,
Whose luminous rays surround a prostrate Angel.

The Virgin sees and wonders; yet she stirs not,
Until she hears, as once in Nazareth's dwelling:
"Ave Maria! Virgin full of grace!"
Erect the figure kneels in breathless rapture
As all the burden of the welcome message
Falls on her listening ears. Then Gabriel tells
In voice melodious, a low, distant music,
That Father, Son and Holy Ghost desire
Their daughter, mother, spouse to come to Them,
To realms of everlasting peace and glory
To reign as Heaven's Queen for evermore.

Then lo! a thousand angels fill the chamber
And wait expectant for the faint reply;
But ecstasy has silenced Mary's voice.
What perfect rapture! How her mother-heart
Leaps up for bliss, as the long-looked-for hour
Seems drawing nigh! All Heaven bends low to hear;
The lips are moving,—angels closer drawn
To catch the whispered words, as she replies:
"Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord:
All things be done according to Thy Word!"

Then loud resound the paeans of delight
That chant the praises of the new-made Queen;
And myriad angels wing their flight to Heaven,
To bear the message to the Three in ONE.

—Marie Felsinger Parcell

The above poem was written by Mrs. Phillip Parcell of Corning whose death occurred Sept., 1941. Mr. Parcell has given his consent for its publication. Mrs. Parcell was the former Miss Marie Felsinger of Rochester, a graduate of Nazareth Academy and of St. Elizabeth's College, Convent Station, N. J.

Diocesan Recordings

THE ETERNAL GIFT—Hardly would anyone expect to find a reverent and devotional atmosphere in a popular motion picture theater. That was the case this week, however, when "The Eternal Gift," the full-length and decidedly impressive motion picture of the Holy Mass, was shown at Rochester's Regent Theater. Rounding out the visible exposition of Solemn High Mass celebrated by Servite Fathers, the masterful explanation of Monsignor Sheen and the beautifully sung choir music were concerts given by Nazareth College, Aquinas Institute, Our Lady of Mercy High School and Academy of the Sacred Heart, singers at four separate nights. A deeper appreciation of the Holy Sacrifice is resultant. The Catholic Workers are to be commended for sponsoring, the students for lending their voices, the theater for showing the film.

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It was being wondered this week how many who entered the theater showing the motion picture of the Mass, after the Gospel, remained to see the picture ever again.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION was given Elmira Corneal Knights of Columbus, in the "Knights of Columbus News" for success in their recent membership campaign and initiation of the "Bishop Kearney Class." A photograph showed His Excellency, Bishop Kearney; the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John J. Lee, V.F., the Rev. Raymond G. Heisel, chaplain; Grand Knight John T. Sargent and co-chairmen of the campaign, Basil J. Vaillancourt, and Eugene F. Agan. Cited was the plan of the Elmira Knights in arranging for the Reverend Fathers to speak at all the churches of the Knights of Columbus as a strong lay organization.

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BASICALLY SOUND. The first regional gathering of Catholic Central Verein and Catholic Women's Union members held in Rochester Sunday brought out 250 men and women from their homes for a meeting that was sound in Catholic thought and discussion. The current trends were studied in the light of Catholic teaching as found in the Papal Encyclicals. In the discussions by this organization, right distinctions are made. For instance, they emphasized the danger in taking mothers of our children in the new women's army corps. Accurate reports do not show that they went on record as opposed to the plan for its entirety as reported following the meeting