



Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans)

Province of Nigeria, South East

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THE FIRE THAT DOES NOT SHOUT – Pentecost Message

“And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like the rush of a mighty wind...”

(Acts 2:2)

My dear Confrères, Collaborators, and Faithful of our Apostolates,

There are moments in the life of the Church that feel less like coincidence and more like providence. This year, the universal Church celebrates Pentecost on Sunday, May 24, and our Province gathers three days later, on May 27, for our annual Province-wide Pentecost celebration. That date is the very day, three hundred and twenty-three years ago, in which Claude Poullart des Places and a dozen poor seminarians met at the Church of Saint-Étienne-des-Grès in Paris to dedicate themselves to the Holy Spirit under the patronage of Mary. Our Congregation was born on a Pentecost day. This year, the calendar quietly returns us to that beginning.

Perhaps the Spirit is returning us to that beginning because we need it. Those first seminarians were poor, uncertain, and easily overlooked, and yet they were the ones the Spirit chose. In many ways, we come to this Pentecost much like they did, because ours are weary times too. Many people today are tired in ways they cannot easily explain. It is the kind of tiredness that sleep does not cure. We see it in families carrying financial strain silently, in young people trying to remain hopeful, in priests and religious who serve faithfully while carrying hidden burdens, in marriages that survive quietly, and in elderly people who sometimes feel forgotten. Even faith itself can become tired. Not absent. Not dead. Just tired! Perhaps that is why Pentecost must be understood properly again.

Part of our tiredness is that we have inherited a noisy understanding of the Holy Spirit. There is a habit in our age of speaking about Him only in the language of spectacle, as though He were almost reducible to noise, performance, and emotional display. But Scripture presents something deeper. Yes, Pentecost came with wind and fire. But before the noise came the silence of waiting. Before the tongues of fire came

frightened disciples behind locked doors. Before Peter preached publicly, Christ breathed quietly upon them privately.

The Holy Spirit is not only the God of dramatic moments. He is also the God of hidden strength. He is the breath of God hovering over chaos in Genesis, the quiet whisper Elijah heard on Horeb, the breath of Christ upon fearful disciples in John 20, and the One Saint Paul speaks of in Romans 8: "*the Spirit helps us in our weakness.*" This is the Spirit who has always worked beneath the surface of things, who steadies what the world cannot see, and who often does His deepest work when people feel weakest. He is present each time a tired confrère still rises for prayer, each time a mother prays for a child who no longer listens, each time forgiveness is chosen over bitterness, each time hope refuses to die quietly. Not every fire makes noise. Some flames warm quietly and still change the world.

It is in this same atmosphere of quiet surrender that the Spiritan story itself began. Claude Poullart des Places did not begin with influence or security; he gathered poor students and entrusted them to Providence. Venerable Francis Libermann, whose bicentenary of baptism we commemorate this year, knew weakness, illness, and interior struggle, yet he learned that the Spirit works most deeply in surrendered hearts. Near the end of his life he said simply: "*Dieu seul. Dieu partout. Dieu en toutes choses*" — God alone. God everywhere. God in all things. That is not passivity. That is Pentecost. Perhaps it is the Pentecost our world now needs. Not merely louder Christians, but deeper ones. Not more religious performance, but transformed hearts.

And this Pentecost is not far from us. It is already being lived quietly across the Province. Today, we rejoice with confrères celebrating Golden and Silver Jubilees of priestly ordination, and others marking fifty and twenty-five years of religious profession as Spiritans. Their fidelity is itself a Pentecost; a quiet fire that has endured through years of service, sacrifice, and surrender. We see that same Spirit alive in confrères serving in difficult missions where the work is hidden and the consolations are few; in formators patiently shaping young men for Spiritan life; in our schools, healthcare apostolates, and parishes where daily faithfulness continues to sustain the Church. We see it also in the members of the Holy Ghost Vocation Movement (HGVM), Spiritan HECAP, the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit, our lay associates, benefactors, benefactresses, and all who carry this mission with us. You are not merely supporters of the mission, but partners in the same work of the Spirit.


To all who carry private burdens this season, illness, grief, or quiet discouragement, may the Lord who breathed on His disciples behind locked doors breathe also on you.

As we gather on May 27, we are not merely commemorating a date. We are remembering a fire handed down across generations. The same Spirit who gathered the Apostles in Jerusalem, gathered a small community in Paris in 1703, and still sustains missionaries today. Ezekiel saw dry bones, but the Spirit saw an army waiting to rise. The Apostles saw locked doors, but the Spirit saw a Church waiting to be born. The world may see exhaustion in our time, but the Spirit sees the possibility of renewal.

So let this Pentecost not pass as another liturgical celebration alone. Let it become an interior reopening of the heart. The Spirit was not given to make us spectacular. The Spirit was given to make us faithful. Sometimes, the loudest thing the Holy Spirit does is to give a tired person the strength to continue.

May Mary, the Immaculate Heart, who waited prayerfully with the Apostles in the Upper Room, teach us again how to wait upon the Spirit with trust. May the Father bless you. May the Son walk beside you. May the Holy Spirit, the Fire that does not shout, give you the courage to begin again.

Happy Pentecost!



Austin Nwosu, C.S.Sp.

Provincial Superior

Province of Nigeria South-East

On the Occasion of the Province-wide Pentecost Celebration, May 27, 2026.

