



Dear Rev. Fathers and Brothers,

On this radiant feast day of Pentecost, celebrated after the seventh week of Easter, and after the 10th day of the feast of Ascension of our Lord, *signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is the feast of the founding of the Church* and marks the fulfillment of Jesus's promise to His disciples just before He ascended in glory to send the Paraclete, the Comforter, down to earth to abide with them (Jn 16:7-11).

The Advocate promised by Christ enters the believing community to guide and protect it during its earthly sojourn. Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem, 'God's Grandeur,' speaks of the splendiddness of this feast through the word, '*the world is charged with the splendour of God*'. The Resurrection of Jesus reaches its powerful climax with an outpouring of life, light and energy for his followers. After Jesus' crucifixion this small group of men and women was hiding. They were afraid and had lost all heart and hope. But through the gift of the Holy Spirit they are filled with courage, enthusiasm and determination. Given new life and hope, they went out into the streets and market places and loudly without our fear, proclaimed the good news of the Resurrection; the missionary church is born as they were charged with the splendour of God.

Therefore, we, the CMI community observe as the CMI Mission day, reminding every member to become conscious of our missionary call. I do take this opportunity to thank all the missionaries of our Congregation who have left their own kith and kin and the homeland to be away to live and preach the Gospel of Christ. Pope Francis in his Apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium* invites and challenges us with these powerful words, "In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples...(This) new evangelisation calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized... We no longer say that we are 'disciples' or 'missionary', but rather that we are always missionary disciples" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 120).

The day of Pentecost is a celebration of God's hand guiding the Christian community through the trials and decisions that are presented to it. If we look back at the daily scripture readings for the past seven weeks, we see a community struggling to come up with answers

to the problems it faced: who should be admitted to the believing community? Should we obey the purity and food laws of the Torah? What roles, rights and duties should Church officials exercise? These were problems that vexed the early community and the descendants of the problems still vex contemporary Christians.

The readings of Eastertide gave testament to a community struggling to organise itself in the best possible and most inclusive way. It was only with the belief that its members were acting with some guidance and grace from God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, that the early Church had the confidence to make the necessary decisions to develop itself.

From that first Pentecost until now, it has always been the belief of the Church that the Holy Spirit directs and guides us collectively and individually. God is not a distant being and the ascended Jesus has not abandoned us. We have the Spirit of God living and working in our lives and in our Church. This gives us hope and optimism at this time as the entire world is going through the pandemic of COVID-19.

The Holy Spirit who empowered the early apostles and disciples of Jesus with the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of depth, the spirit of courage, the spirit of love and the spirit of oneness two thousand years ago (as well as others, eons before) is the same Holy Spirit who empowers us today. Today, the world stands in need of the same Holy Spirit who helps us to accept the will of God and not to lose heart when we grope in the dark nights of the present pandemic and despair seems to defeat our minds.

Fortified by the Holy Spirit, the early Christian community became a community that consoled and cared for each other. As the world today is threatened by the COVID-19, situation and we are made to be aware of our own limitations and restrictions, still there is a bond of love that makes us care for one another. Taking inspiration from the Holy Spirit, the font of wisdom and courage, we need to stand for one another and not to get isolated from the other. Today, in our homes, parishes and communities, schools and places of work, we too are called to be living witnesses of Christ, the healer and as caretakers of life which He has entrusted to us. We need not be worried or afraid of this great responsibility, for God has filled each of us with his own Spirit, 'You are my servant, whom I strengthen, in with whom I am well pleased, I have filled you with my spirit' (Is. 42.1). In this connection, I would like to invite your attention to the letter already sent to the communities proposing various initiatives and programmes that we can take up in various levels to reduce the suffering of humanity. We need to act promptly and seriously to think of ways and means to help the people in their fight against the pandemic situation created by COVID-19.

Pentecost is not a one-time event but rather a re-awakening to the indwelling Spirit of God and the Spirit-inspired dynamics of all creation. It connects our spiritual experience, both personal and communal, with God's Divine Presence rooted in love. Filled with the Spirit, we are able to love as God loves. Filled with the Spirit we are co-creators of God's Kingdom in this time and place.

Every generation needs to experience Pentecost for itself. It needs God's spirit in its own particular way. 'Pentecost-living' means living life from the reservoir of God's creative energy that renews our sense of purpose and significance and guides us beyond limitations

towards new life. Awakening to and living from God's indwelling Spirit means opening our hearts and minds to God's transforming Life, God's creating Energy, and God's abiding Love. As such, the Spirit of God is present and active today through each of our diverse gifts for the benefit of all. Now that's Good News, let's go out and spread it!

Wishing you a blessed feast of Pentecost and praying for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on each and every one of us to be courageous missionaries of Christ,

Yours in our Lord,

Fr Thomas Chathamparampil CMI
Prior General