



My Dear Parishioners,

Praised be Jesus Christ! As we arrive at this last Sunday of May, we come to Memorial Day Weekend and find ourselves in the middle of our Pentecost Novena! "Come Holy Spirit, renew the face of the earth"! Those words found a famous expression 43 years ago this week, as Pope John Paul preached in Victory Square in downtown Warsaw. He spoke those words on the Vigil of Pentecost to hundreds of thousands of peoples and they became the symbolic beginning of changes that led to the emergence of Solidarity in 1980 and the eventual downfall of communism. I share some of his words of

that day with you. Let us pray for our own native land as we remember our dead and pray for God's Holy Spirit to fall on our land.

Peace,

Fr. Rogers

Today, at the first stopping place in my papal pilgrimage in Poland, it is granted to me to celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice in Victory Square in Warsaw. The liturgy of the evening of Saturday the Vigil of Pentecost takes us to the *Upper Room in Jerusalem*, where the Apostles, gathered around Mary the Mother of Christ, were on the following day to receive the Holy Spirit. They were to receive the Spirit obtained for them by Christ through the Cross, in order that through the power of this Spirit they might fulfil his command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). Before Christ the Lord left the world, he transmitted to the Apostles with these words his last recommendation, his "missionary mandate". And he added: "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Mt 28:20).

For man cannot be fully understood without Christ. Or rather, man is incapable of understanding himself fully without Christ. He cannot understand who he is, nor what his true dignity is, nor what his vocation is, nor what his final end is. He cannot understand any of this without Christ. Therefore Christ cannot be kept out of the history of man in any part of the globe, at any longitude or latitude of geography. The exclusion of Christ from the history of man is an act against man.

The history of the nation deserves to be adequately appraised in the light of its contribution *to the development of man and humanity*, to intellect, heart and conscience. This is the deepest stream of culture. It is culture's firmest support, its core, its strength.

We are before the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I wish to kneel before this tomb to venerate every seed that falls into the earth and dies and thus bears fruit. It may be the seed of the blood of a soldier shed on the battlefield, or the sacrifice of martyrdom in concentration camps or in prisons. It may be the seed of hard daily toil, with the sweat of one's brow, in the fields, the workshop, the mine, the foundries and the factories. It may be the seed of the love of parents who do not refuse to give life to a new human being and undertake the whole of the task of bringing him up. It may be the seed of creative work in the universities, the higher institutes, the libraries and the places where the national culture is built. It may be the seed of prayer, of service of the sick, the suffering, the abandoned. All that in the hands of the Mother of God—at the foot of the cross on Calvary and in the Upper Room of Pentecost!

All that I embrace in thought and in my heart during this Eucharist and I include it in this unique most holy Sacrifice of Christ, on Victory Square.

And I cry—I who am a Son of the land of Poland and who am also Pope John Paul II—I cry from all the depths of this Millennium, I cry on the vigil of Pentecost:

Let your Spirit descend.
Let your Spirit descend.
and renew the face of the earth,
the face of this land.
Amen.