

## PENTECOST

Hymns: 224, 232, 231, 235, 236

### THE INTROIT

(Wis.1:7; Ps.68:1,3)

*P: The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world:*

**C: Hallelujah!**

*P: Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God:*

**C: Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

*P: Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered:*

**C: let them also that hate Him flee before Him.**

### THE COLLECT

O God, who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end.

### The FIRST LESSON

**Joel 2:28-32**

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

### THE GRADUAL

(Ps.104:30; Liturgical text)

*P: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

*P: Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created:*

**C: and Thou renewest the face of the earth. Hallelujah!**

*P: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful:*

**C: and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Hallelujah!**

### The EPISTLE

**Acts 2:1-13**

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Psalm 104:30)

*P: Hallelujah! Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created:*

**C: and Thou renewest the face of the earth. Hallelujah!**

**The HOLY GOSPEL**

**St. John 14:23-31**

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

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John 14:23-31 — “For My Father Is Greater than I”

INTRODUCTION

I. IF A MAN LOVE ME

II. IF YE LOVED ME, YE WOULD REJOICE

III. FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I

CONCLUSION

John 14:23-31 — “For My Father Is Greater than I”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Today is the Festival of Pentecost and the appointed reading of the Gospel is John 14:23-31:

**Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.**

**These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.**

**And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Pentecost is an exciting festival in the Church Year. The Lord Jesus has endured the Passion for which He was born to endure. He has arisen from the dead. He has come to His disciples many times during the forty days of leading His Church through the wilderness. He has ascended to heaven for the purpose of making this day of celebration reality. Today the Church celebrates the sending of the Holy Spirit to guide and guard the saints in the peace of God that is in Christ Jesus. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit we are instructed in what it means truly to love the Lord our God so that we rejoice in the knowledge that He has gone to the Father who is greater.

I. IF A MAN LOVE ME

Our text begins with the Lord Jesus answering the question that one of His disciples had asked.

**Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?**

**Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make**

**our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**

Judas, not Iscariot, asks a very interesting question. He wonders why the Lord Jesus does not show Himself openly for who He is to the world, but only to the apostles. The answer to Judas' question is given with respect to the office of the Christ. He recalls to the disciples what was recorded through Moses:

**The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15-22)**

Jesus did not come to speak to the world. He came to speak to the Church. He came to live among those through whom the Word would go into the world. He came to establish His apostles for the Church, through whom the LORD would be made manifest in His body to the world. And how will the world know the Church as the body of Christ? Those who are truly of the body of Christ love Him and keep His words. Which words will they keep? His saints never ask such a question as this. For they know what Peter confessed, that Jesus has the words of everlasting life. Those who have been brought into God's Holy Communion do not pick and choose which words of Jesus to hold fast, for they believe that their everlasting salvation is granted them through all of the words of Jesus, for the Word that Jesus gives is the very Word of the Father.

**Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.**

**“If a man love me . . .”** This is not philo but agape. This is not the emotional attachment that so many proclaim with songs like, “Oh, how I love Jesus!” Those who truly love Jesus do not focus upon their love for Jesus, but upon the love of God that is given in the body of Jesus through which the fullness of the Godhead comes to us. With the gift of Jesus at Bethlehem, God came to live with man to redeem and save mankind. God was with His people through the preaching of the Word even from the time of Adam. But God came in fullest measure in the person of Jesus the Christ. And now He comes to those who love Jesus so as to hold fast to His words, and both the Father and the Son come and make their residence with those who love Jesus so as not to let go of any of the things that Jesus has spoken.

How do the Father and the Son come to us today?

**These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**

The Holy Spirit is how both the Father and the Son come to us to abide with us in the body Christ, the Church. This is an amazing revelation. It is far greater than most people realize. The Father sent the Son to be born of the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary. Jesus is the very Logos of God. He is the very embodiment of all that God is. Through the Son the Father comes to the world to save the world. Now that God has accomplished this atoning work among men, now that atonement must be applied to each individual for whom Christ suffered and died. Thus, in the name and power of God, that is, in the name of Jesus, the very Word through which all things were brought into existence, now the Father sends the Holy Spirit to restore life to those to whom the Word comes through the life of the Church, the life of His body in the world.

Thus the answer to the question that Judas asked is that Jesus *is* manifesting Himself to the world. Wherever the saints gather as the true Church, wherever two or more gather in the unity of the name of Jesus, gathering unto the preaching of the pure Word, without adulterating the Word and without omission of any of the words of Jesus, without changing what Jesus has ordained for the life of His Church on earth, there the Holy Spirit is at work and the Father and the Son also are present.

II. IF YE LOVED ME, YE WOULD REJOICE

**Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.**

Jesus leaves us with His peace. That peace is the gift of the pure administration of the Word and Sacraments through which the Holy Spirit works to bring salvation to the world. Through these means the Holy Spirit comes to us and converts us from unbelievers to believers and from damned sinners to sanctified keepers of God's Word.

This peace is not like what the world gives. The world gives no peace at all. Rather, the world takes peace away from us and sets us against one another. The world leads us to think and believe that peace is a selfish thing, a possession that we must somehow acquire for ourselves. Thus we seek to obtain money and other forms of worldly mammon by which we hope to find security and comfort. But these are vain attempts at peace that only lead us to struggle even more. We turn this way and that way, turning to doctors and medications and sex and alcohol and food and entertainment, hoping through these to find satisfaction for our bodies and souls. But we are never truly satisfied through these efforts. So we turn to religion and establish bodies of faith in the hope of finding security and peace, only to find that these, too, fail us. These fail us because they also are worldly mammon, things that we have fashioned in our own image.

The peace that the Lord Jesus leaves to us is not from this world but from above. His peace does not come to by means of anything that we do, but by what He has done and continues to do for us through the means of grace and the continual mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

Rather than urging us to form church bodies, the Holy Spirit calls us to the body of Christ, which needs no formation. It is from everlasting to everlasting. The body of Christ exists from eternity. The body of Christ is found wherever the words of Jesus abide in totality in accord with what Jesus has spoken. For these are the very words that come to us from the Father. They are the words of the One True God who never lies and never fails to do as He has promised. He is the God who is Love. He does not merely command love, but He is Love. When He comes to us through the means of grace, He brings us the love that we need. He is the peace that we cannot find. He is the life after which we pursue. When He comes to us, all pursuit of happiness ends, for in Him our life is complete. In Him we have true peace for in Him we are at rest. When the Holy Spirit incorporates us into Him in His body we learn what it means to come home.

This is why Jesus tells Judas and the other apostles that if they had loved Him that they would have rejoiced in hearing the news that He was going from them to the Father. But the Holy Spirit had not yet come to them to teach them this love that fills the believer with pure joy. They did not even understand what it meant that Jesus was going to the Father. Thus Jesus explains, knowing that they will not truly understand until Jesus returns to them.

### III. FOR MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I

**Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.**

**And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.**

Jesus says that if His disciples truly love Him that they will rejoice in knowing that their Lord goes to the Father, for His Father is greater than He. This is an amazing statement of comfort and joy, if one hears it as Jesus declares it.

The disciples did not understand and so their hearts were troubled. They did not understand the twofold going to the Father and returning again to the disciples. Jesus plainly explains the meaning in this text, but even today people do not hear what He says.

For what purpose did the Father send Jesus into the world? Was it not to save the world from the powers of sin, death, and the devil? Was it not to humble Himself through obedience to the death of the cross by which the sin of the world would be atoned? Was it not to make Himself lower than the most wretched sinner ever to live so as to take the sin of every person who ever would live? Was it not to be humbled and humiliated, to be stripped bare and to be beaten and tortured and crucified to death? Was it not to suffer the humiliation of being accused and condemned for the evil deeds of others, to be mocked and scorned and spit upon as the most despised person ever to live? To bear this humiliation the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, was sent to the world! Why? Because God is Love!

This is why Jesus was going to the Father as He explains in our text. He who is Very God of Very God was now going to the Father to receive from Him the punishment that the Holy Trinity had decreed that Jesus would suffer as the Christ, the Son of Man, in our place. He was returning to the Father to receive our condemnation for our sin. He was going to the Father to

appear as the Lamb of God who takes the sin of the world. He was going to the Father to fulfill all for which He was sent into the world. St. Paul explains this beautifully in Philippians 2, saying:

**Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

This is why Jesus says: **“If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.”** Yes, if His disciples had loved Him they would have heard the message of the cross that their Lord had preached to them and that Peter, James, and John had heard Moses and Elijah discussing with Jesus atop the mount of Transfiguration. If they had loved their Lord, they would have heard His declaration that He was making Himself to be the One who would stand before the Father in judgment and condemnation for the sin of the world, and they would have rejoiced to be witnesses to such a great work of pure love and to be recipients of all that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit had counseled from eternity to work in the person of Jesus the Christ.

But this is only the first part of His going to the Father. For after fulfilling all righteousness by suffering and dying in our place, Jesus was also going to rise from the dead in His body to return to His disciples, no longer with the humiliation of the title of the one who was made to be Sin, but as the Lord of Glory, the very Lord of lords and King of kings! Now He would spend time with His disciples in preparation for His going to the Father to resume His place of ruling over all. Never again would sin be a cause for suffering, for He rose in the freedom of the resurrection and ascended to the power that is His from eternity, but not only as the Son of God but also as the Son of Man! Now, in the name of Jesus all things are restored. God’s Holy Communion gathers in the name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is sent to the Church in the name of Jesus. The Father is made known fully to us by the Holy Spirit’s preaching in the name of Jesus. Now and forevermore salvation is ours in the name of Jesus. God now Baptizes us into the name of Jesus and feeds us the very body and blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins and our continual renewal in the life of His body. In His name we are free truly to live!

Yes, indeed, as the one who would be damned in our place, as the one who would take our sin before the judgment seat of the Father and cry out as so full of our sin that darkness blotted out the sun at midday and blinded even the Son of God to the love of God so as to cry out with the blindness of our sin, **“My God! My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”**, Jesus spoke of being made to be less than the Father. This is the language of the Cross. This is the language of our salvation. But now, Jesus rules as both God and Man from the very throne of heaven. The Holy Spirit has been sent to us in His name. Now God and Man are reconciled in the body of Christ. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit come to us in the waters of Baptism and commune with us in the bread and the wine of Christ’s body and blood. Truly, hearing such news will fill us with the love of God so that we rejoice in knowing that our Lord has gone to the Father.

## CONCLUSION

After the resurrection, there is no more talk of greater or lesser in the Godhead. Before the humiliation of Jesus Philip asked that Jesus show them the Father and that would be sufficient for them. Jesus responded, saying, **“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”** (John 14:9)

After the resurrection this question was settled for all. When Jesus showed Himself to the disciples on the eve of the resurrection, coming to them beyond the closed door, no one asked to see the Father. When Jesus came again with Thomas present and Thomas encountered the risen LORD, His singular and automatic response was, **“My Lord and My God!”** Jesus called this response a response of true faith and added that this is what all should believe and confess even without seeing Jesus. With this faith, which is created in us by God through the Gospel, all doubts disappear. All the power of sin is stripped away so that we know the love of God in our lives and we believe His grace, mercy, and peace that He gives through the means of grace. Our fears are turned to utmost confidence. Our doubts are replaced by absolute faith. Our suffering becomes insignificant in our hearts and minds as God’s peace rules our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Truly, the humiliation to which the Lord Jesus subjected Himself so that He even spoke of going to the Father as one who was less than the Father, truly this Love is made to be ours by the working of the Holy Spirit so that we are filled with joy. Now we come to God through one name, the name of Jesus, the name that has been exalted above every name so that by this name God hears and answers every prayer and counts our worship as glory unto Him. This is the testimony and life that the Holy Spirit gives and through which the Father and the Son come and commune with us. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.