

Via Lucis: the Light that guides us

Just as, in her long tradition, the Church has remembered the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ in a moving pilgrimage of fourteen stations that remembers how he was ridiculed, his tortuous suffering and his death, so a more recent tradition seeks to contemplate fourteen episodes in those extraordinary fifty days of Easter that, little by little, awakened the hearts of disciples who were desolate, confused, afraid and heartbroken after the brutal execution of their Master.

After the darkness that came over the land with the Lamb's sacrifice, a new cosmic Light starts to glow.

This Light of the resurrection, the Church receives like mildew that gently waters the earth with a gentle rhythm so eyes that were used to blinkers and darkness—like our own eyes—can adjust gradually to the glory of Light that is God himself.

Today, as we are still held captive and dispirited by darkness, we allow Light to guide us gently

- from the Light that breaks into the hiddenness of Hades, where Christ descended to conquer over Death, to the burning Light of the Holy Spirit who sanctifies all the earth,
- from the empty tomb to the extraordinary vision of tongues of fire.

That's how the Church is (re)born, how the Church is made holy, how the Church proclaims the Good News of a New Creation to all men and women.

The First Light: Christ is risen!

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (28: 1-6)

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay."

Moment of silence

The First Light was not seen by the living. It was experienced by the dead—the souls in Hades—who, because they died carrying the mark of Adam's sin, could not bear the light of God's glory. In their imprisonment, they received the grace of experiencing salvation first.

In the darkness of the abyss, the Light of the first day broke through, when the dead body of Jesus—the Son of God who became human like us in everything except for sin... indeed became human like us even in death—rose from the dead with divine Light emanating through him.

Christ is risen! And the entrails of the world—the void of the dead, the true periphery of human existence—were filled with Light and became alive.

From now on, God's glory will shine over all: because Christ annihilated death; and no darkness can resist the Light that glows in the world through his being.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Second Light: The Beloved Disciple saw the empty tomb... and believed

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20: 1-9)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Moment of silence

"The other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved... the other disciple... also went in, and he saw and believed." And as the Gospel claims: "This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true" (21:24).

The first Light that the living receive is not Christ himself, but faith, deep trust in Christ himself. Even when we don't understand, when we don't even see, even when what we do see confuses us, faith is the Light through which we receive salvation. Faith gives us eyes to behold the invisible; a heart that grasps what is incomprehensible. Because faith is not a mere human act of conviction: it is an experience of love and utmost trust.

The Beloved Disciple is also the disciple who loves: since, as the Evangelist himself teaches, there is no true love that does not evoke reciprocity. Thus, the love that was bestowed on him, the love that he received, is the first Light, the fullness of faith, the deepest trust in our Saviour. Of this love bestowed, of this love exchanged, the Church is witness.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Third Light: Jesus encounters Mary Magdalene... the Apostle to the Apostles

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20: 11-18)

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher).⁴⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Moment of silence

Mary of Magdala saw the empty tomb, but all she understood was that his dead body was no longer there. And the deep sorrow that she felt, that even his dead body was taken away from her, left her devastated. In her persistence, in her not wanting to let go, not even in death—in the same way she had accompanied in life even to the cross—twice she hears the question echoing in her ears: "*Woman, why are you weeping?*"

Mary's tears are the symbol of a tender heart that builds no walls, of a soul that even when faced with the cruelest tragedy continues to trust and hope. If the Disciple was loved by his Teacher, the "Woman" displays all the signs that she clearly loved the Master. And it is this love that Jesus reciprocates when he calls her by name—"*Mary!*"—and opens her eyes to see him as he really is... before his brothers, even before he ascended to the Father.

Mary was the first to receive the Light of the Resurrection in her encounter with the Risen Christ. Light, the joy that burns in her heart, could not be contained within her, for life cannot be confined to tombs.

Swift as lightning, she runs to his brothers to share the good news: the joy of the resurrection. Thus, she is remembered as Apostle to the Apostles.

"I have seen the Lord."

Salvation is now revealed on the face of the earth. Mary Magdalene is its first witness.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Fourth Light: The Road to Emmaus

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (24: 13-27)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

Moment of silence

The disciples of Emmaus are indeed you and me. Just like them, we have shared lived experiences with Jesus (maybe a lifetime of them); just like them, we are horrified when he is mocked, tortured, even condemned to death. Just like them, we seek a way out when we fear that, if he ended up hanging from a cross, things might not turn out so well for us either.

And just like them, our eyes are too blind to see Light.

Our ears might hear the Word, maybe even listen; but our hearts do not believe. In the deepest recesses of our being we persist in unbelief, we continue choosing death, even when the Risen One walks with us, accompanies us patiently, waits for us to grasp somewhat the Story of Salvation he shares with us. Our own perception of God—"we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel"—blinds us to who God truly is.

But Light still shines upon us, never leaving us in pitch darkness. For He is Risen, and salvation is the true gift that God desires to offer to all humankind: that our eyes are truly opened and we can contemplate God face to face.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Fifth Light: “Their eyes were opened”

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (24: 28-35)

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Moment of silence

“*Their eyes were opened*” and they received Light. The disciples, engrossed in their sorrow, would still not abandon a stranger to continue walking alone at night. They welcomed him and invited him to spend the night with them. And just as their Teacher had blessed and broken the bread in their last night, so they remembered, so they understood, so their eyes were opened and they recognised him.

In the breaking of bread, they recognised how he had given them his flesh to eat and his blood to drink for their salvation.

In the breaking of bread, they recognised that he had kept his word about what he had promised them: that he would rebuild the Temple in three days.

In the breaking of bread, they recognised the deepest truth: that the History of Salvation finds its culmination in the Messiah who was the Light who had walked alongside them, who had burnt their hearts within them, and who now was empowering them never to fear any dark night.

Thus, even if he vanished from their sight, they returned to Jerusalem to be reunited with their friends and encourage them with their witness.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Sixth Light: “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures”

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (24: 36-49)

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah^h is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Moment of silence

The Light that continues to enlighten the People of God is the word itself in the Holy Scriptures. The Risen Christ “*opened their minds to understand the scriptures,*” so throughout the ages, the same Light keeps reminding them of the passion of the Messiah, of his rising from the dead, and of the forgiveness of sins. Thus, they remain faithful in their witness, and the Good News touches all peoples.

The fact that Jesus chooses to be present to all his disciples—and not just to encounter those he was personally closest to—reveals how this is the faith, the witness, the mission, of the whole Church and not just of the few.

Just as the seed of the Good News had to break open and grow in the Land of the Chosen People with whom God had bonded himself in covenant, so the first fruits of salvation had to be offered to the new chosen People, so they would scatter the seeds of the Good News all over the world. The harvest that the Lord seeks at the end of times, is never of mere individuals or groups enclosed and cloistered from the world. But always of Peoples, with their long complex histories, with their particular character and traditions, with all the struggles that shape them in time.

Thus, the Light of the Gospel fills the earth. But as it refracts, it reveals all the different colours of the rainbow, the diversity of Peoples, recalling the original covenant that God sealed with Noah: that he would always remain close to all his children, regardless of who they are.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Seventh Light: “Peace be with you.”

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20: 19-23)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Moment of silence

As we reach the half-way mark in the narrative of how our eyes are gradually opened to experience Divine Light—exactly in the seventh step—we encounter not just the Light of the Risen Christ, but also the promised Light of the Advocate: the one who the Father was sending so he would remain forever with his People. Jesus had encouraged them to “stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49). And in this narrative of the Minor Pentecost, we see the Risen Christ consecrating his friends when, as it was in the beginning of creation, “*he breathed on them*”, filling them with his Holy Spirit.

God breathed unto Adam and the human became an image of the divine. The first man became the creature, chosen among all those on heaven and earth, to be his partner in creation, so God’s dream for the cosmos would come to be.

Likewise, Christ breathes unto the seed of the Church and she takes on his likeness, his holiness. She becomes his own Body, to birth the world anew through the salvation that she bears witness to.

That’s why the Holy Spirit is the “peace” ... *shalom*... fullness... *pleroma*... that the human was created for: a full and everlasting life in body, mind and soul, in perfect harmony and friendship with one another and the Living God.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Eighth Light: The Glorified body of Christ marked by the wounds of the world

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (20: 24-29)

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Moment of silence

Because one person, Thomas the Twin, was absent from the chosen community, Jesus returns to them, to bless them again, to breathe upon them again: *"Peace be with you."*

Every person is unique and unrepeatable in the eyes of the Father and the Son who saves the world in his name. Just like the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep to go looking for the missing one, so Jesus could not be at ease knowing he had not yet encountered one of his friends. And now, at the very end of his mission after the Resurrection, to open the eyes of the first Christian community, the Risen Christ gives the gift that he had denied even to Mary Magdalene. "Touch me," we can imagine him saying, "touch the wounds and know that I am he."

The wounds in his glorified body are the mark of Christ as Victor among us.

The wounds in his Church are the sign that only the Holy Spirit consecrates her.

The Spirit does not annihilate the past and its cruel scars.

The Spirit heals and purifies the past, so that our future is more whole.

But in the last days, the marks of our suffering, remain as a living reminder of how we were saved from the slavery of sin.

And how we were consecrated, not because we were worthy of his grace, but because we are loved as we are.

"Thomas... believe." Believe that salvation has come, that salvation is unfolding even when our eyes are too weak and all we can see are the wounds, not the hope of new life that they promise.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Ninth Light: Jesus shares a meal with his disciples

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (21: 1-14)

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Moment of silence

Jesus chooses to meet, for the third time, his disciples gathered together. But this time he meets them in their ordinary life, in their labour as fishermen. Indeed, he blesses and multiplies the fruit of the lifestyle they had grown up into, of the trade that they were skilled in, of the work of their hands that provided their daily bread. Indeed, as he blessed the waters that provided a multitude of fish, he prepared a meal for his friends, even if it still took them long to recognise him.

The heart desires to know the Light of Christ, but it takes much longer for human eyes to get used to the Light.

For the third time, their eyes are heavy, and it takes them a while to adjust to the Light.

For the third time, they are unable to speak, even if their own Teacher is gentle and kind towards them.

When we are on holy ground, in the presence of God, all we can do is bow our head and receive his love as we also realize how his infinite grace and his generous abundance is simply too much for our little souls and minds to bear.

As we are confronted by the Lord's infinite tenderness, we become even smaller, like little children, as we recognise that we are nothing. Still, in that nothingness, we are everything to Him who loves us.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

Tenth Light: Peter, the Missioned Disciple

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (21: 15-19)

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

Moment of silence

In this tenth step along the path of the Light that guides us, we remember especially how Light sought the one who Christ chose as the Rock on whom to build his Church. Peter had betrayed his Master three times. Just like Peter, the Church through the ages repeatedly betrays her baptismal vows. But the Risen Christ still trusted this vulnerable man. In the same way, the Risen Christ still trusts his fragile Church called to be the voice, hands and feet through which he seeks to bring salvation.

But on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, the Master desires from Peter—and from his Church—not just service, but something deeper. It is not quite what we do that makes us his; it is rather the intimacy with which he binds us to himself.

For three times, Jesus asks Peter: "*Simon son of John, do you love me?*"

He does not ask "**Peter**, do you love me?" ... but "**Simon son of John**, do you love me?"

From the deepest foundation of who we are—of our story, of our identity, of that we know about ourselves and even what we don't know—from that most profound reality that makes us unique and unrepetable, Jesus asks "*do you love me?*"

The Beloved Disciple—the exemplary Disciple of the Johannine tradition—loved because he was loved first. The same goes for Simon son of John. And for each one of us today.

So when we, just like Simon, hear this question echo in our hearts, we realise that the Risen Christ is challenging us with a deeper question: is your heart open enough to receive mine? Are you empty enough to be filled with my love?

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Eleventh Light: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”

R/. Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

V/. He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (28: 16-20)

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Moment of silence

At this eleventh step on the Way of ever brighter Light, the Church receives her great commission from the Master: “*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.*” The Church’s mission is to grow as the communion of saints: of those blessed through their encounter with Christ and who in drinking of his love, are freed from slavery and the suffering of their wounds, and because they are born anew, receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism.

Through Baptism, man and woman are reborn in water and Spirit, so they also become disciples missioned to all nations, to all corners of the world.

And in their zeal, in their labour, in the kindness they show to one another, and in the care they shower even on all that the Father provides in his generous bounty, the Land itself, the earth itself, is sanctified: the new earth is the new creation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Rejoice and be glad! Alleluia!

V/. The world has seen salvation! Alleluia!

The Twelfth Light: The Ascension of our Lord

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,
V/. Come to sanctify us with your Gifts!

*Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,
Who sanctifies with your Gifts
Who speaks through those whom you choose to bless with Glory!*

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1: 6-11)

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Moment of silence

"You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe" (Jn 14: 28-29).

On the last night, Jesus had prepared his disciples for a difficult truth: there was little time left and they would not be seeing him any longer. But he had also sought to encourage them: they should rejoice that they will no longer be able to see him, because that would be a sign that the time had come; the time, not just when Death was conquered, but when the Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, would blow again over the earth blessing it.

The beginning of the end times, the rebirth of creation, and the consolation of the desolate starts unfolding as the Father sends the Paraclete to remain with the community made holy in Christ's name.

Hence, the Church rejoices with the Light of Christ's Ascension; rejoices because she knows that the Light that was spreading all over the earth will never be extinguished.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,
V/. Come Holy Spirit, renew our hope!

The Thirteenth Light: The Church who gathers and prays

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,

V/. Come to sanctify us with your Gifts!

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (1: 12-14)

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Moment of silence

After the Risen Christ ascends to heaven and returns to his Father, the Church gathers again to wait expectantly. As the community of disciples had done on the last night before his passion and crucifixion, the Church returns to the Upper Room to pray together.

And there they were gathered: the disciples, each one mentioned by name, each one of those chosen to be Apostles of the Lord, sent by him. Like the crumbs of the one loaf scattered from the mountains, so they will scatter to sow the seeds of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church born in all nations (cf. Didache 9:4).

Together with them, there were also gathered others who were chosen, men and women; these are also among the friends whose different charisms will build the one People of God.

As they gathered with His Mother, and our Mother, Mary, they became one family in the Lord. In this pregnant moment they are truly one; they become "one heart" in their prayer, in their shared experience of the Risen Lord.

The community of the living waits expectantly to receive the brightest Light, the Light that will glow in the fire of love in the whole world.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,

V/. Come and make us one communion in Christ's name!

The Fourteenth Light: The Descent of the Holy Spirit on all flesh

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,

V/. Come to sanctify us with your Gifts!

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2: 1-11)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

Moment of silence

The celebration of Pentecost reminds us that God's Power has truly penetrated the earth: the presence that rushes like a violent wind, that consoles like a warm light, that satiates our thirst with living water, and most crucially, that breaks down all walls separating peoples and people, as one tongue, in one voice, they can sing songs of joy as One Holy People chosen in the blood of the Lamb.

The Holy Spirit who descends fills the earth and sweeps over every nation.

But not always in a way that is easily discernible by the eyes of flesh. Hence, the need for His Gifts, bestowed on every member—each one according to their measure and talent—of the communion of saints. Thus, they can come together to discern his Presence, to be guided by his Light, to be robed in Christ, and thus to touch and heal every broken and wounded reality on earth.

Where the Spirit blows, there the Church grows: from blood, in service, with words of kindness, through the creative potential of so many who, together, bear witness to the Good News of salvation.

The Holy Spirit who comes among us is the Light of Love, of friendship, of solidarity, of union. Little by little, as we imitate one another while being patient with one another, with the kindest tenderness we show to one another, the Church births Peace... *Shalom*... that changes the world.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be

R/. Come Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life,

V/. Come speak with the words of those whom you divinise!