

Dear brothers and friends,

we remember that evening when the disciples took refuge in that room. They were afraid of authorities. They closed the doors. They feared for their lives. Suddenly Jesus, without any warning, shows up among them. From that moment on, everything starts changing. The greeting of peace, the sending and the divine breath begin a new creation, that of the project of divine love for all humanity.

This gesture is decisive and is accompanied by a word: Jesus “**breathed** on them and said, ‘**Receive the Holy Spirit.**’” (Gv 20:22). This is how the Church was born, the result of a divine breath, of a gift from God. That group of frightened men and women completely transforms, they take to the streets to announce what they have seen and experienced: Jesus Christ is alive! The Holy Spirit makes them disciples-missionaries of the gospel.

Thinking of our Xaverian Family while bearing in mind the context in which we have been for three months because of the Covid-19 and its resulting consequences, I think that the celebration of the Pentecost is a great grace. Today, we need to feel Jesus breathing on each of us and freely giving us this great gift: the Spirit of God, His divine strength. We too have lived and, depending on the country we find ourselves in, continue to live this closure, this stay in the house with closed doors.

Two are the fruits of the Spirit that I feel we need so badly at this time. The first is **TRUST**. Trust in God and in ourselves. We ask many questions ourselves about the post-Covid-19 world, that is, about our tomorrow. Well, the Spirit tells us that the future belongs to God. Our efforts and our will are not what determine it. We are in God's hands. Today, Jesus repeats with us the same gesture he made with the first disciples. The future belongs to God, and only the Spirit can help us believe in this truth. It is what Jesus asks of us: to trust him, to believe in his Word. "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:33).

The second fruit is **CREATIVITY**. For some time now, we have been seeing, indeed living, what is called an epochal change. The future will not repeat the past. This is true for us and for our missionary family too. A very important change is taking place. In this context, we can feel disoriented, even a little lost without knowing what will become of us tomorrow; what our missionary presences will be, what will happen to our structures, to our Institute. Yet, the Lord's promise remains forever. "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland" (Is 43:18-19).

Dear brothers and friends all, at this time more than ever, we need to put our unconditional trust in the Lord's promise, and our active collaboration in the search for the novelty that lies before us. As missionaries, we are not sedentary but nomads who walk with a light gear. Since the beginning of the Daring Project, as sons of Conforti, in the places where the Lord has sent us, we have often distinguished ourselves for creativity. Well, it is this creativity, the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which we need today. Let us then throw out, beyond our walls, all sorts of complaints,

pessimism, gossiping and unhealthy chatter etc. Let us be led by the divine gifts of creativity and courage, and by the search for the scattered signs of the Kingdom of God in the places we are.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize briefly some of the elements that characterize a community whose members are guided by the Spirit of God. Here they follow:

- The first is to speak more about God and less about us. We are consecrated to God and not to ourselves. The Spirit helps us to always look up to what is High and not to what is down below, to think first about God and not us.
- The second is to listen before we speak. God is revealed to us mainly through the mediation of the brethren with whom we form the same Family. Listening to the brother means loving him. Eventually, talk when you need to and do it with plenty of respect. When you talk to another, it is to God you are talking to.
- The third is to share more with each other what we live and think, our feelings, our research etc. Sharing gives quality to our community life and helps us to walk together as brothers.
- The fourth is to pay attention to the "gentle whisper" (1 King 19:12-13) of the Lord's presence in our midst. For this reason, it is required that we cultivate a great human and evangelical sensitivity. God manifests himself in so many ways, often in situations we never imagined it possible. A community led by the Spirit knows how to grasp the signs of this divine presence and makes it the object of community discernment.

I wish each of you a good Pentecost celebration. I wish you all to receive the fullness of the gifts of the Spirit. My greetings to your families, and all the friends. May God lead us to walk together the path of life.

Happy Pentecost feast!