

# BE AGLOW *with* THE SPIRIT

*Rom. 12:11*

## Reflection:

May 2021

St. Paul, writing to the Romans (12:11) insists that there is no room for lukewarmness in Christian life. In this verse, he speaks of the intensity of religious commitment, warning the readers against growing 'slack in zeal,' and urging them to 'be aglow with the Spirit.' He reminds us that the fire which God's Spirit has kindled in us must be kept constantly burning, stirring fervour in each one of us.

We know that the story of Jesus Youth cannot be told without mentioning the Holy Spirit, for the substance and foundation of what we have to say concerns the gift of the Spirit and his presence and action in us. In fact, our spirituality begins with a personal encounter with Jesus through 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit.' This profound experience of God reawakens the rich and fruitful interiority given to us in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, giving us the unique dignity as the children of God. So, when Paul urges us to "be aglow with the Spirit" he invites us to be increasingly aware of our dignity as the adoptive children in God. This is an invitation to transform our way of thinking, acting and being in a decisive manner.

The greatest spiritual awakening which took place on the day of Pentecost shattered the fetters of fear and awoke the disciples from slumber. They emerged from the Cenacle, carrying the fire of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, went out into the world proclaiming the message of salvation. Their active commitment for evangelization sustained their zeal and helped them to remain open to the gentle action of the Spirit.

Although it is true that at times Paul concentrates solely on the Spirit's dynamic and active nature, the Spirit's influence on the action of Christians, he also brings out His influence on their being. Thus, he asserts that it is the indwelling presence of the Spirit that marks our identity as the children of God. He reminds us that the Spirit of God dwells in us (cf. Rom. 8: 9; 1 Cor. 3: 16) and "God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts" (Gal. 4: 6). We have been "set free from the law of sin and death" and have received the spirit of sonship, and as children, we can call God "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8: 2, 15, 16).

So, it is important for us to remember that the identity of a Jesus Youth constitutes in becoming a Christocentric and Christophoric person. And as such, every Jesus Youth, in the first place, must be persons of intense prayer, who cultivate a communion of love and life with the Lord. There is no true prayer without the presence of the Spirit within us (Rom. 26-28). This, of course, requires a degree of great and vital communion with the Spirit. So, when Paul urges us to "be aglow with the Spirit" it is an invitation to be increasingly sensitive, more attentive to the indwelling presence of the Spirit, and to speak to the Father as children in the Holy Spirit. Without this sound spiritual basis, how could one persevere in zeal for the Lord and his Kingdom?

Paul also reminds us of another important quality to keep the Spirit aglow in us: "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom. 5: 5). Commenting on this unction of love, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us: "The Spirit, in fact, is that interior power which harmonizes [believers'] hearts with Christ's Heart and moves them to love their brethren as Christ loved them" (Deus Caritas Est., n.19). Yes, the Spirit immerses us in the very rhythm of divine life, which is a life of love, enabling us to share personally not only in the relations between the Father and the Son, but also stimulates communion among ourselves and helps us to weave charitable relations with all people making room for the Spirit to express himself fully within us. Consequently, the Spirit's action helps us to share the "joy, vitality and fullness of the life discovered in Christ" with our brothers and sisters.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity, in its Decree approving the Statutes of Jesus Youth on May 15th, 2016, the Solemnity of Pentecost, exhorts us to "seek holiness and to engage in missionary discipleship in our daily lives through specific apostolates, rooted in an outpouring of the Holy Spirit"

Therefore, having celebrated the Coral Jubilee of Jesus Youth, let us recommit ourselves to this journey of holiness and discipleship, seeking the prayers of Mother Mary, the spouse of the Holy Spirit. May her maternal mediation help us to imitate her as the surest way to be aglow in the Spirit.

### Fr George Kumblumoottil O.P.

He is a well-known preacher and is closely associated with the movement for more than three decades. He has a doctorate in the Christocentric pneumatology of John from Angelicum University in Rome