

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50th  
ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE MEETING BETWEEN POPE PAUL VI AND PATRIARCH  
ATHENAGORAS IN JERUSALEM  
(24-26 MAY 2014)

**HOLY MASS**

***HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS***

*International Stadium (Amman)*

*Saturday, 24 May 2014*

Video

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus promise the disciples: "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever" (*Jn* 14:16). The first Paraclete is Jesus himself; the *other* is the Holy Spirit.

We are not far from where the Holy Spirit descended with power on Jesus of Nazareth after his baptism by John in the River Jordan (cf. *Mt* 3:16) and today I will go there. Today's Gospel, and this place to which, by God's grace, I have come as a pilgrim, invite us to meditate on the Holy Spirit and on all that he has brought about in Christ and in us. In a word, we can say that the Holy Spirit carries out three actions – he *prepares*, he *anoints* and he *sends*.

At the baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus to *prepare* him for his mission of salvation, the mission of one who is a Servant, humble and meek, ready to share and give himself completely. Yet the Holy Spirit, present from the beginning of salvation history, had already been at work in Jesus from the moment of his conception in the virginal womb of Mary of Nazareth, by bringing about the wondrous event of the Incarnation: "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, will overshadow you – the Angel said to Mary – and you will give birth to a son who will be named Jesus" (cf. *Lk* 1:35). The Holy Spirit had then acted in Simeon and Anna on the day of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple (cf. *Lk* 2:22). Both were awaiting the Messiah, and both were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Simeon and Anna, upon seeing the child, knew immediately that he was the one long

awaited by the people. They gave prophetic expression to the joy of encountering the Redeemer and, in a certain sense, served as a *preparation* for the encounter between the Messiah and the people.

These various works of the Holy Spirit are part of a harmonious action, a sole divine plan of love. The mission of the Holy Spirit, in fact, is *to beget harmony* – he is himself harmony – and *to create peace* in different situations and between different people. Diversity of ideas and persons should not trigger rejection or prove an obstacle, for variety always enriches. So today, with fervent hearts, we invoke the Holy Spirit and ask him *to prepare* the path to peace and unity.

The Holy Spirit also *anoints*. He anointed Jesus inwardly and he anoints his disciples, so that they can have the mind of Christ and thus be disposed to live lives of peace and communion. Through the anointing of the Spirit, our human nature is sealed with the holiness of Jesus Christ and we are enabled to love our brothers and sisters with the same love which God has for us. We ought, therefore, to show concrete signs of humility, fraternity, forgiveness and reconciliation. These signs are the prerequisite of a true, stable and lasting peace. Let us ask the Father to anoint us so that we may fully become his children, ever more conformed to Christ, and may learn to see one another as brothers and sisters. Thus, by putting aside our grievances and divisions, we can show fraternal love for one another. This is what Jesus asks of us in the Gospel: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you for ever" (*Jn 14:15-16*).

Lastly, the Holy Spirit *sends*. Jesus is the one who is sent forth, filled with the Spirit of the Father. Anointed by the same Spirit, we also are *sent* as messengers and witnesses of peace. The world has much need of us as messengers of peace, witnesses of peace! The world needs this. The world asks us to bring peace and to be a sign of peace!

Peace is not something which can be bought or sold; peace is a gift to be sought patiently and to be "crafted" through the actions, great and small, of our everyday lives. The way of peace is strengthened if we realize that we are all of the same stock and members of the one human family; if we never forget that we have the same Father in heaven and that we are all his children, made in his image and likeness.

It is in this spirit that I embrace all of you: the Patriarch, my brother bishops and priests, the consecrated men and women, the lay faithful, and the many children who today make their First Holy Communion,

together with their families. I also embrace with affection the many Christian refugees; let us all earnestly turn our attention to them, to the many Christian refugees from Palestine, Syria and Iraq: please bring my greeting to your families and communities, and assure them of my closeness.

Dear friends! Dear brothers and sisters! The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the Jordan and thus inaugurated his work of redemption to free the world from sin and death. Let us ask the Spirit *to prepare* our hearts to encounter our brothers and sisters, so that we may overcome our differences rooted in political thinking, language, culture and religion. Let us ask him *to anoint* our whole being with the oil of his mercy, which heals the injuries caused by mistakes, misunderstandings and disputes. And let us ask him for the grace *to send* us forth, in humility and meekness, along the demanding but enriching path of seeking peace.

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