

The Holy Day of Pentecost

The whole interior of the Last Supper room was, on the eve of the feast, ornamented with green bushes in whose branches were placed vases of flowers. Garlands of green were looped from side to side. The screens that cut off the side halls and the vestibule were removed; only the gate of the outer court was closed. Peter in his episcopal robe stood at a table



covered with red and white under the lamp in front of the curtained Holy of Holies. On the table lay rolls of writing. Opposite him in the doorway leading from the entrance hall stood the Blessed Virgin, her face veiled, and behind her in the entrance hall stood the holy women. The Apostles stood in two rows turned toward Peter along either side of the hall, and from the side halls, the disciples ranged behind the Apostles took part in the hymns and prayers. When Peter broke and distributed the bread that he had previously blessed, first to the Blessed Virgin, then to the Apostles and disciples who stepped forward to receive it, they kissed his hand, the Blessed Virgin included. Besides the holy women, there were in the house of the Last Supper and its dependencies one hundred and twenty of Jesus' followers. After midnight there arose a wonderful movement in all nature. It communicated itself to all present as they stood in deep recollection, their arms crossed on their breast, near the pillars of the Supper Room and in the side halls, silently praying. Stillness pervaded the house, and silence reigned throughout the whole enclosure.

Toward morning I saw above the Mount of Olives a glittering white cloud of light coming down from Heaven and drawing near to the house. In the distance it appeared to me like a round ball borne along on a soft, warm breeze. But coming nearer, it looked larger and floated over the city like a luminous mass of fog until it stood above Sion and the house of the Last Supper. It seemed to contract and to shine with constantly increasing brightness, until at last with a rushing, roaring noise as of wind, it sank like a thunder cloud floating low in the atmosphere. I saw many Jews, who espied the cloud, hurrying in terror to the Temple. I myself experienced a childlike anxiety as to where I should hide if the stroke were to follow, for the whole

thing was like a storm that had suddenly gathered, that instead of rising from the earth came down from Heaven, that was light instead of dark, that instead of thundering came down with a rushing wind. I felt that rushing motion. It was like a warm breeze full of power to refresh and invigorate. The luminous cloud descended low over the house, and with the increasing sound, the light became brighter. I saw the house and its surroundings more clearly, while the Apostles, the disciples, and the women became more and more silent, more deeply recollected. Afterward there shot from the rushing cloud streams of white light down upon the house and its surroundings. The streams intersected one another in sevenfold rays, and below each intersection resolved into fine threads of light and fiery drops. The point at which the seven streams intersected was surrounded by a rainbow light, in which floated a luminous figure with outstretched wings, or rays of light that looked like wings, attached to the shoulders. In that same instant the whole house and its surroundings were penetrated through and through with light. The five-branched lamp no longer shone. The assembled Faithful were ravished in ecstasy. Each involuntarily threw back his head and raised his eyes eagerly on high, while into the mouth of everyone there flowed a stream of light like a burning tongue of fire. It looked as if they were breathing, as if they were eagerly drinking in the fire, and as if their ardent desire flamed forth from their mouth to meet the entering flame. The sacred fire was poured forth also upon the disciples and the women present in the antechamber, and thus the resplendent cloud gradually dissolved as if in a rain of light. The flames descended on each in different colors and in different degrees of intensity. After that effusion of heavenly light, a joyous courage pervaded the assembly. All were full of emotion, and as if intoxicated with joy and confidence. They gathered around the Blessed Virgin who was, I saw, the only one perfectly calm, the only one that retained a quiet, holy self-possession. The Apostles embraced one another and, urged by joyous confidence, exclaimed: "What were we? What are we now?" The holy women too embraced. The disciples in the side halls were similarly affected, and the Apostles hastened out to them. A new life full of joy, of confidence, and of courage had been infused into all. Their joy found vent in thanksgiving. They ranged for prayer, gave thanks and praised God with great emotion. The light meanwhile vanished. Peter delivered an instruction to the disciples, and sent several of them out to the inns of the Pentecost guests. Between the house of the Last Supper and the Pool of Bethesda there were several sheds and public lodging houses for the accommodation of guests come up for the feast. They were at this time very numerous, and they too received the grace of the Holy Ghost. An extraordinary movement pervaded

all nature. Good people were roused interiorly, while the wicked became timid, uneasy, and still more stiff-necked. Most of these strangers had been encamped here since the Pasch, because the distance from their homes rendered a journey to and fro between that feast and Pentecost altogether impracticable. They were become, by all that they had seen and heard, quite intimate and kindly disposed toward the disciples, so that the latter, intoxicated with joy, announced to them the Promise of the Holy Ghost as fulfilled. Then too did they become conscious of a change within their own souls and, at the summons of the disciples, they gathered around the Pool of Bethsaida.

In the house of the Last Supper, Peter imposed hands on five of the Apostles who were to help to teach and baptize at the Pool of Bethsaida. They were James the Less, Bartholomew, Mathias, Thomas, and Jude Thaddeus. The last-named had a vision during his ordination. It seemed to him that he was clasping to his breast the Body of the Lord.

Before departing for the Pool of Bethsaida to consecrate the water and administer Baptism, they received on their knees the benediction of the Blessed Virgin. Before Jesus' Ascension, this ceremony was performed standing. On the following days I saw this blessing given whenever the Apostles left the house, and also on their return. The Blessed Virgin wore on such occasions, and generally when she appeared among the Apostles in her post of dignity, a large white mantle, a creamy white veil, and a scarf of sky-blue stuff that hung from her head down both sides to the ground. It was ornamented with embroidery, and was held firmly on the head by a white silken crown.

Baptism at the Pool of Bethsaida had been arranged by Jesus Himself for this day's feast, and the disciples had, in consequence, made all kinds of preparations at the pool, as well as in the old synagogue that they had appropriated for their own use. The walls of the synagogue were hung with tapestry, and from the building down to the pool a covered tent-way was erected.

The Apostles and disciples went in solemn procession, two by two, from the house of the Last Supper to the Pool. Some of the disciples carried a leathern bottle of holy water and an asperges. The five Apostles upon whom Peter had imposed hands separated, each taking one of the five entrances to the pool, and addressed the people with great enthusiasm. Peter stepped upon the teacher's chair that had been prepared for him in the third circle of the Pool, counting from the outside one. This terrace was the broadest. The hearers filled all the terraces of the pool. When the Apostles spoke, the multitude hearkened in amazement, for everyone listened to what sounded

to him his own language. It was owing to this astonishment of the people that Peter lifted up his voice, as is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. As many presented themselves for Baptism, Peter, assisted by John and James the Less, solemnly blessed the water. The holy water, which they had brought in a leathern bottle from the house of the Last Supper, Peter sprinkled in fine streams far over the pool with an asperges. The preparations for Baptism and the Baptism itself occupied the whole day. The neophytes approached Peter's chair in bands and by turns, the other Apostles preaching and baptizing at the entrances. The Blessed Virgin and the holy women were busy in the synagogue near the pool, distributing the white garments to the neophytes. The sleeves of these garments were bound over the hands with black bands, which were taken off after Baptism and laid together in a pile. The neophytes leaned upon a railing. The water was scooped up in a basin and then with the hand poured three times over the head. It flowed again through a channel into the pool below. One basin held enough water for about ten couples. Every two baptized gave place to two neophytes upon whom they laid their hands as sponsors. Those baptized here today were they that had received John's baptism only. The holy women too were baptized. The people added to the Community today amounted to three thousand. That evening the Apostles and disciples returned to the house of the Last Supper, where they took a repast and distributed blessed bread. Then came the evening prayer. The Jews offered today in the Temple little baskets containing two small loaves made of this year's grain. The baskets were deposited one upon another, until they formed high heaps, and they were afterward distributed to the poor. Once I saw that the High Priest had in his hand a bunch of ears, thick like maize. Something like roots also was offered, and some kind of fruit unknown to me. The strangers under the sheds had asses laden with them, and the people made purchases of them. The bread was of their own baking. The Apostles offered only the two loaves through Peter. On the following days also, preaching and baptizing went on at the pool. Before the Apostles and disciples went down for these duties, they received the blessing of the Blessed Virgin.