

INFANT JESUS SISTERS

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PENTECOST 2017

Dearest Sisters and Friends,

A very happy feast of Pentecost to you all! May you receive the abundant gifts that the Holy Spirit is freely offering on this great feast.

* *What is inspiring you this Pentecost?*

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Throughout the season of Easter, we have been focusing on what brings us life. The events of Pentecost, however, invite us to experience God in new ways. These fresh ways of seeing and experiencing are unexpected and come with the 'rush of a violent wind'. They fill us with new passion that burns 'as of fire'. And they provide us with 'other languages', or alternative ways of communicating, so that we can share this good news with others. Like the vision that sends the pilgrim to a foreign land, these moments of inspiration invite us to begin a new journey, deepening our experience and widening our boundaries, gently moving us towards transformation.

The apostles were there on that first Pentecost, as well as Mary and the 'other women'. The mighty wind of God's Spirit swept through Jesus' followers and filled them with a new joy and a sense of God's presence and power. Peter, who only a few weeks before had 'wept bitterly' after he denied even knowing Jesus, found himself on his feet explaining to a huge crowd that something had happened which had changed the world forever. What God had done for Peter, God was now doing for the whole world: new life and forgiveness, new hope and power, were opening up like spring flowers after a long winter. A new age had begun in which the living God was going to do new things in the world, beginning at that moment among the people who were listening to Peter.

'This promise is for you', he said, 'and for your children, and for everyone who is far away' (Acts 2:39). God longs to give the Holy Spirit to each of us. All we have to do is ask.



The experience of the wind rushing through the house with a great roar and the fire coming to rest on each person must have been both terrifying and exhilarating. What the Spirit will do within us when he comes will undoubtedly surprise us! We should be prepared for wind and fire but the Spirit often comes softly and secretly, quietly transforming people's lives and situations.

* *How prepared am I to welcome a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit into my life?*

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Pentecost day is marked with exuberance, confidence and abundance. Things that seemed impossible begin to happen, and a message that seemed difficult to comprehend or express is widely proclaimed. It is a new beginning. Pentecost is the moment where we enter fully into the mystery and our names are written into the story. Pentecost is our gateway to eternal life.

Let us have no doubt about the generosity of the Spirit who pours out his gifts in abundance to those who are open and who desire them with all their hearts. Also, each one of us has a unique gift through which we serve and build up the community.

* *What is my gift to the community?*

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* *What gifts of the Spirit do I most need to build up the christian and wider community?*

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As Infant Jesus Sisters and friends, we have come to realise that we are part of a continuing story in which we proclaim with confidence our faith in Jesus Christ. At the same time we recognise that God is already present in the places and people to whom we are sent. Wherever we go, we cross boundaries of culture and language to share boldly and to listen with humility, to give and to receive; to enter into a new relationship by which we may together draw closer to God's transforming love. Together each day we are creating the future we long for by the decisions we make and the actions we take.

The Holy Spirit was central to the life of Nicolas Barré. The Holy Spirit is therefore central to the nature and aim of the Institute of the Infant Jesus Sisters, its spirituality and its mission within the Church and the world, *'Relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, our whole life is animated by love, which is for us the source of disinterestedness, humility and availability, freedom and daring.'* (B.I. 1)

The world around us has changed and continues to do so. Over the last fifty years or more we have lived with this constant and rapid change. We have dealt with the shifts in our societies, the church, the world and the universe. Some of us lead the change, others readily embrace it, and of course, some are resistant to it. Absolute clarity is no longer there in our relationship with the church, theology, ecclesiology or cosmology. Everything is changing. What we can often lose is the gift of seeing the innovation and creativity within the change. *Can I allow the Spirit to breathe change and newness into my life? How is the Holy Spirit asking us to respond in our rapidly changing world, where destructive and frightening things sometimes happen, but which is always beautiful and full of wonder?*

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At Pentecost, the disciples received the Holy Spirit and were emboldened to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to others. Let us pray for the courage to share our story with others and for the humility to listen to the stories that others have to tell.

Wherever we are today, whatever is happening in our lives, the Spirit is with us. Inspired by the Holy Spirit's action, we receive the courage to lift our hearts in hope and the Spirit fills us, making us new.

Today let us invite God's Spirit into our hearts. Filled with that Spirit, may we each make our contribution to the community to which we belong. And, as a community, may we give clear and unmistakable witness to the Truth and Love of God, revealed to us in Jesus our Lord.

Kimiko, Maria, Noreen and I wish you, your families and friends the love, peace and gentleness that the Spirit offers as well as the courage and daring to go forth on God's mission.

May the Holy Spirit be with you all!

Maire

