

In today's Gospel passage Jesus tells the disciples to stay in the city until they are clothed with power from on high. He is telling them to wait for the Spirit, the Advocate Whom He is sending to them, before they begin the mission of being His witnesses to the world. The disciples returned to Jerusalem, and prayed for nine days before the Spirit was poured out upon them. This was the first novena, a model for praying with expectation of a special grace or blessing.

Jesus told His disciples to wait for the Spirit to empower them so that their mission would truly be God working through them, and not them working on their own. We must begin the same novena today. We need the renewed Presence of the Spirit in our church. All that has gone on is an indicator that too many people are working on their own in our church, out of touch with God's grace and power.

Our greatest efforts, if they are merely human, are prone to corruption and self-service. We have mixed motivations for even the good we do, and all too easily fall into making the mission about ourselves. Some are trying to re-shape the church in their own image, instead of the image of Christ. Others seek power and prestige and get caught up in church careers instead of missions. Some wish to use the Church to stifle change, so that their comfortable or privileged positions in society are not threatened. Others use the Church as a refuge from reality, a place to hide, where one will be taken care of. Some use the church to exhibit their self-righteousness. Others use it to hide their sins.

Our only hope is to be connected with the living Spirit of God and letting that divine will be accomplished in us and through us. Our Church is in desperate need of a novena. Please join in the prayer. Come, Holy Spirit!

God bless you.

Fr. Pat