



Jesus Returns To the Father

“To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God.”

Acts 1:3

After He rose from the dead, Jesus stayed here on earth for forty days. He appeared to His disciples many times. He gave the Apostles the power to forgive sins. He told them how to bring the Good News to places all over the world. Apostle means one “who is sent.” Jesus was sending them to teach all people about His saving love.

One day, the Apostles were out in a boat, fishing. They could not find many fish. A voice from the shore called, “Throw your nets to the right side.” It was Jesus, but they didn’t know it. They did what He said and pulled up so many fish that they could not lift the net.

Then John, the Apostle, knew Who was on the shore. “It’s the Lord,” he shouted. Peter was so excited that he jumped into the water and swam to the beach.

There on the shore, a fire was built. Fish were being cooked. Jesus asked the Apostles to eat. After they ate, Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" Each time Peter said, "You know that I love you." Then Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Feed my lambs." This meant that Jesus wanted Peter to take care of all His followers. Peter became the first Pope.

Soon the time came for Jesus to go back to His Heavenly Father. The Apostles were sad that He was going. They did not feel ready to go and preach without Jesus at their side. But Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit. He would show them what to do and make them strong enough to do it.

Jesus walked up a mountain with His friends. "Go and teach everyone. Baptize them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. I will be with you always, even to the end of time."

Then Jesus rose up into the sky and went back to Heaven. This was the **Ascension**. Jesus is King of Heaven and earth. He has prepared a place in Heaven for all those who love Him. Someday, at the end of the world, Jesus will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Words to Know:

Apostles

Ascension

21
30

The Coming of The Holy Spirit

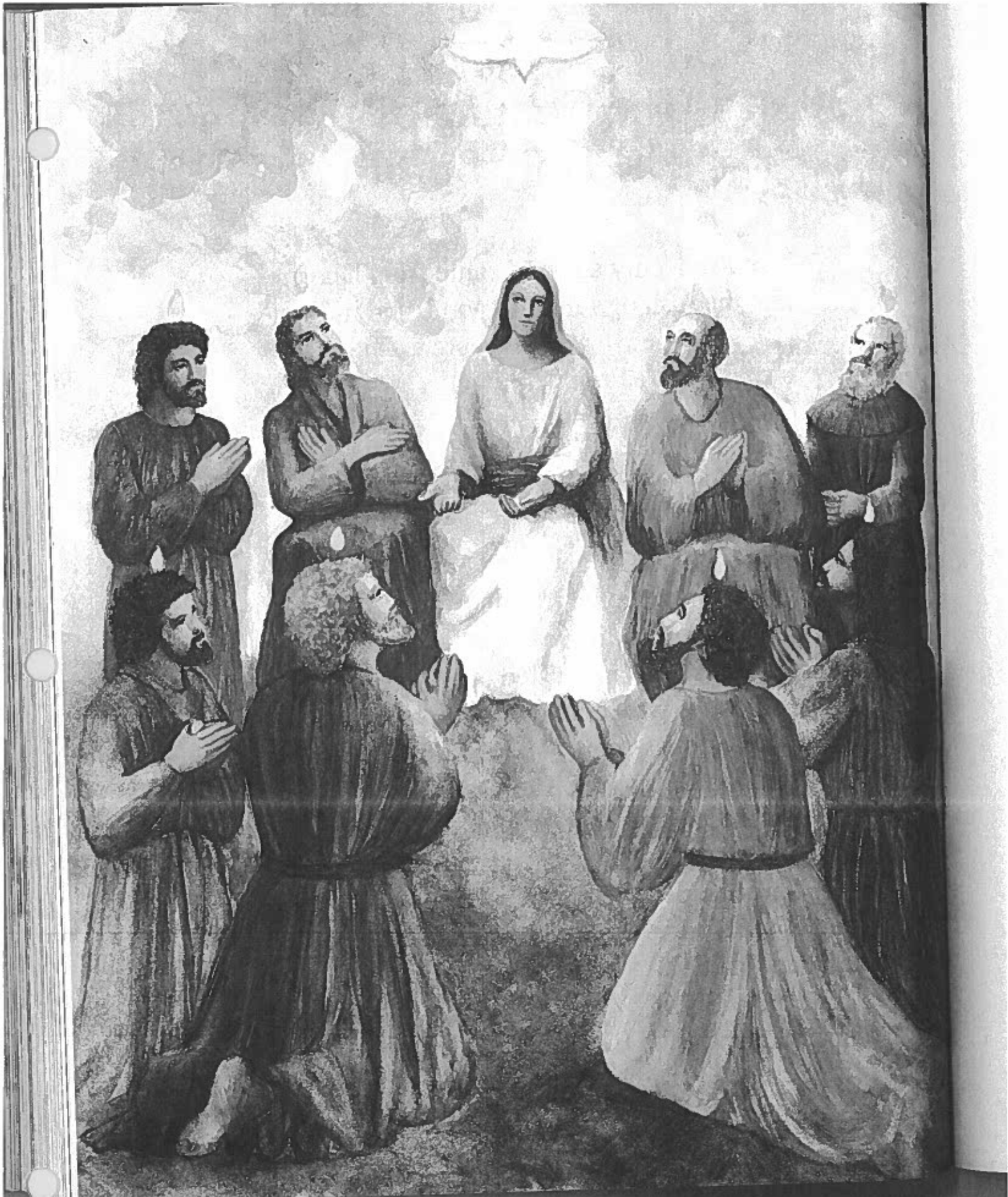
“And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them.”


Acts 2:2-3

After the Ascension the Apostles stayed in a house with Mary. They prayed together for nine days. Then, all at once, the sound of a great wind filled the house. Little flames of fire came and rested on each of them.

The Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit. They were not afraid anymore. They left the house and began to teach about Jesus. The Holy Spirit had given them many gifts. One was that people from all over the world could understand what the Apostles were saying. The Holy Spirit helped them to preach so well that many people believed in Jesus. Three thousand people were baptized that day!

The Holy Spirit, Who came to the Apostles, is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit





came to us at Baptism. He helps us to pray and to love. He gives us the grace to win the fight against sin. He helps us understand the things we learn about God.

The day the Holy Spirit came to the Apostles is called **Pentecost Sunday**. We celebrate this day in church each year. We also call Pentecost Sunday the “Birthday of the Church.” Those who were baptized on Pentecost were the first members.

We have talked a lot this year about the Sacraments of Baptism, Penance, and the Holy Eucharist. A Sacrament is a sign from Jesus that gives us grace. Whenever a Sacrament is received, special words and things are used as signs of the grace God gives us. There are seven Sacraments in all:

1. Baptism: When Original Sin is washed away. We receive the new life of grace and become children of God.

2. Penance: When our sins are forgiven by Jesus by confessing our sins to the priest.

3. Holy Eucharist: When we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus under the appearance of bread and wine.

4. Confirmation: When the Holy Spirit comes to us with His gifts, just as He did to the Apostles at Pentecost.

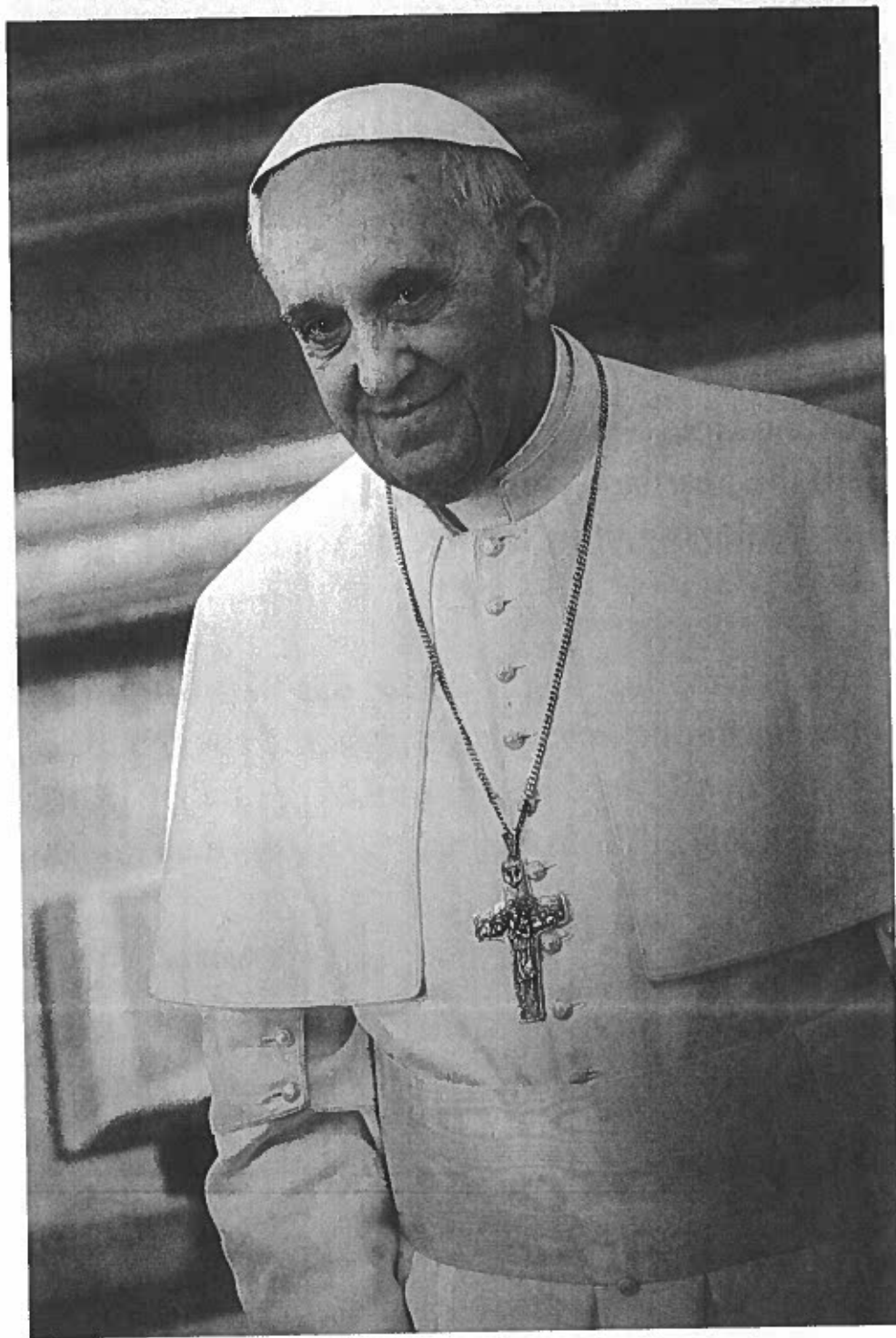
5. Marriage: When a man and a woman marry each other they stand before the Church and make promises to live together according to God's Laws, and to help each other grow holy.

6. Holy Orders: When a man receives this Sacrament he becomes a deacon, priest, or bishop. A bishop lays hands on the man's head and confers on him the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

7. Anointing of the Sick: When someone is very sick or in danger of death, a priest can anoint him with holy oil. This will give him the grace to die in God's friendship, or it may even heal him of the sickness.

Word to Know:

Pentecost



31 God's Family — The Church

“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

Matthew 16:18–19

The Apostles preached and baptized in many lands. The Church grew and grew. Today there are Christians in every part of the world.

Jesus made Peter the head of His Church on earth. Today the **Pope** has Peter's job. He is the leader of Catholics everywhere. **Bishops** carry on the work of the Apostles. There are thousands of bishops in different parts of the world. They look after us as good shepherds taking care of their sheep. The bishops take the place of Jesus on earth.

The Pope and bishops with him teach us in Jesus' name. They explain the Bible to us and tell us how to lead good lives. They also make rules about the Mass and the Sacraments. Everything Jesus wants us to know is taught by the Catholic **Church**.

Each bishop has many helpers called priests. Priests receive special powers from the bishop. They can forgive sins in the Sacrament of Penance. They can change bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

There are other helpers in the Church called deacons. Deacons help both bishops and priests to celebrate the Eucharist, spread the Good News of Jesus, and minister to the poor.

Some members of God's family live a special kind of life. They promise to spend all their time doing God's work. We call them religious sisters and brothers. They teach, work in hospitals, help the poor, and spend the whole day praying for us all.

Most members of God's family are not bishops, priests, or sisters. They are men, women, boys, and girls like those you see each Sunday in church. Each of us has an important part to play in the Church.

The Church is like a body. A body has many parts. If even one small part is hurt or missing, the whole body suffers. Each small part does something that the others cannot do. That is how the Church is. You can help the Church in a way that no one else can. The prayers and actions of many others help you.

The Church makes us holy. It brings the grace of God to everyone. Each of us can receive that grace and become holy. We can also bring God's grace and love to others.

“When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.”

John 19:26–27

Mary was with the Apostles at Pentecost. During the days after Pentecost Mary did everything she could to help the new Church grow. She wanted everyone to know about what her Son had done for all men.

When it was time for Mary’s life on earth to end, God did something very special for her. He took her, body and soul, into Heaven. How happy Mary was to see her Son again! Jesus made His Mother the Queen of Heaven and earth.

Do you remember how Jesus gave His Mother to us when He was dying on the Cross? Mary is Mother of the Church and the Mother of each of us. We can turn to Mary and tell her about our problems. She will understand. We can learn from Mary how to be good. She always did what God wanted her to do and she



never sinned. If you are ever tempted to do something wrong, ask Mary to help you, and to pray with and for you. She will pray with you. She will pray for you.

Mary has a special love for little children. Sometimes she lets them see her. About one hundred years ago she came down from Heaven to visit two girls and a boy who lived in Fatima, Portugal. She asked them to make sacrifices for sinners and to say the **Rosary** every day. The children thought Mary was the most beautiful, wonderful person they had ever seen. They were happy to do what she said.

Today millions of people say the Rosary each day for world peace, because of what Mary told those three children. She told them that we would only have peace if we were good and pleasing to God.

Word to Know:

Rosary