

The Church stands today in a strange and beautiful moment.

The Ascension has happened.

Christ has gone before the eyes of the apostles into heaven.

Pentecost has not yet come.

So where is the Church?

Waiting.

Praying.

Looking upward.

And the readings today teach us what the Church must be
in every age between Ascension and Pentecost—

between Christ's victory and the full manifestation of His Kingdom.

The Gospel opens with Christ lifting His eyes to heaven.

This is not ordinary prayer.

This is the prayer of the Eternal High Priest.

Christ stands at the threshold of His Passion and glorification,
and He speaks to the Father.

And what does He ask? **“Holy Father, keep them in your name.”**

Keep them.

Because the world constantly pulls souls away from God.

Away from truth.

Away from holiness.

Away from communion.

And Christ knows how weak His apostles are.

He knows Peter will deny Him.

He knows the others will scatter.

And yet He prays for them.

Not that they be removed from the world—but that they be kept from the evil one.

That matters enormously.

Because the Catholic Faith is not escape from the world.

It is fidelity within it.

The Church does not flee the world.

She remains in it as light, as witness, as truth.

Then Christ says something decisive:

“Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

That is one of the great lines of the Gospel.

Because holiness and truth can never be separated.

The modern world tries constantly to divide them.

It says:

Be loving, but not doctrinal.

Be spiritual, but not definite.

Be kind, but never absolute.

But Christ says: Sanctify them **in the truth**.

Not apart from it.

Because souls are not made holy by confusion.

They are made holy by reality.

By what is true.

And this is deeply Catholic.

Truth is not invented by the age.

Truth is received. Guarded. Handed on.

That is why doctrine matters.

That is why the Church teaches clearly.

Not to control souls—but to save them from falsehood.

Because error does not sanctify, does not save.

Truth sanctifies. Truth saves.

Then Christ says:

“As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.”

The Church is sent.

Not hidden.

Not silent.

Sent into the world to proclaim what she has received.

And this mission continues now.

The apostles handed on the Faith.

The bishops preserve it.

The Church proclaims it.

And every Catholic is called to live it publicly and faithfully.

Now the first reading.

The apostles gather after the Ascension.

And what are they doing?

Praying. **“All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer.”**

That is the Church waiting for Pentecost.

Not rushing ahead.

Not trusting in human plans.

Waiting for power from above.

And notice who is there: Our Lady Mary. The Mother of Jesus.

At the birth of the Church's mission,
Our Lady stands at the centre of the praying Church.

That is not accidental.

The Church gathers with Mary
because she is the perfect disciple—the one who received the Word completely.

And this teaches us something vital.

The Church is not self-created.

She receives before she acts.

Grace first.

The Holy Spirit first.

Prayer first.

Then St Peter speaks with striking realism:

“Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you.”

Again, the Scriptures refuse illusion.

To live the Catholic Faith faithfully will bring conflict.

Because the world does not resist wishy-washy and tolerant religion.

It resists truth.

It resists holiness.

It resists the claim that Christ is Lord.

And Peter says:

“If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed.”

Not comfortable.

Blessed.

Because suffering for Christ unites the soul more deeply to Him.

Now all three readings come together.

Christ prays that His Church remain in truth.

The apostles gather in prayer with Mary awaiting the Spirit.

St. Peter warns that fidelity will bring suffering.

That is the shape of the Church in every age.

Truth.

Prayer.

Mission.

Endurance.

And this becomes very concrete for us.

Because the temptation today
is to reduce the Catholic Faith to something soft and private.

Something cultural.

Something occasional.

But Christ does not pray for softness.

He prays: **“Sanctify them in the truth.”**

So the Church cannot abandon truth to gain acceptance.

She cannot stop proclaiming what Christ has revealed.

Because souls need truth more than approval.

But this truth is not cold.

It is living.

Because the Church does not exist merely to teach ideas.

She exists to bring souls into communion with God.

That is the purpose of everything.

The Mass. The sacraments. Prayer. Doctrine.

All of it ordered toward union with the Blessed Trinity.

That is heaven.

That is the destiny Christ prepares.

And this is why the sacraments stand at the centre of Catholic life.

Because grace is not symbolic.

It is given.

In Baptism, divine life begins.

In Confession, the wounded soul is restored.

In the Eucharist, Christ feeds His people with His own Body and Blood.

Especially the Eucharist.

Because here, the prayer of Christ continues.

He sanctifies His people in truth.

He strengthens them for the mission into which they are sent.

And this is why Sunday is not an optional extra.

It is the heart of Catholic life.

Because without remaining close to Christ,
the world slowly reshapes the soul.

Prayer weakens.

Conviction fades.

Truth blurs.

And eventually the Faith becomes cultural rather than living.

But today the Church stands in the Upper Room again.

Waiting for Pentecost.

Praying with Our Lady.

Asking to be made holy.

Asking to remain faithful.

Asking not to be overcome by the spirit of the age.

And so the question becomes very simple: What is shaping your soul?

The world—or Christ?

Because one or the other will prevail.

So remain close to the Church.

Remain close to the sacraments.

Remain close to prayer.

Remain in the truth handed on by the apostles.

Not harshly.

Not proudly.

But faithfully.

Because Christ did not pray merely that His people survive.

He prayed that they would be sanctified.

Made holy.

And that holiness begins now—

in truth,
in grace,
in the life of the Church—

until the day we follow Christ
where He has already gone:

Into the glory of the Father.