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The Holy Spirit makes us God's children

After rising from the dead, Jesus spent forty days teaching his disciples about the kingdom of God. We tend to assume it would have been better if our Lord had stayed here and continued to teach. Imagine how easily he could convince people that he had risen from the dead! Instead, he returned to heaven to be seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

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Jesus said he needed to do this in order to send the Holy Spirit to his disciples: “It is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”

Before ascending, Jesus instructed his disciples not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. “It is”, he said, “what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but, not many days from now, you are going to be baptised with the Holy Spirit.”

Why was it better for Jesus to go? What was it so important to send the Paraclete? The Holy Spirit makes us God’s children. Instead of one Son of God spreading the Gospel, divine wisdom planned for thousands—

eventually millions—of sons and daughters spreading the Gospel. The descent of the Spirit was—and continues to be—an “anointing”, turning every disciple into another Christ, that is, another “anointed one”.

Without calling ourselves *missionaries*, we ought to think of ourselves as men and women who have been entrusted with a mission. What is our mission? “Proclaim the Good News to all creation!”

Remember the parable where the Master gives one talent of gold to each of his servants, instructing them, “Trade till I come.” Upon returning the Master asks each servant to render an account: “What have you done with the talent I gave you?” As one of the saints explains, “A great task awaits us. We cannot remain inactive, because our Lord has told us, *Trade till I come*. As long

as we are awaiting the Lord's return, when he will come to take full possession of his kingdom, we cannot afford to relax."

What Jesus said to the first disciples remains true today, "Look around you! Look at the fields! Already they are white, ready for the harvest." In other words, many will accept the Gospel as soon as they find someone who can show them the way. God needs men and women fully dedicated to him—ordinary Christians living and working in the middle of the world. As in the beginning, the Holy Spirit will work through them to lead souls to Christ.

This article by Fr. Joe Babendreier first appeared in the Sunday Nation in May 2013.

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