

## **Sermon for the Closing of Pentecost Congress - Trinity Sunday 12 June 2022**

We have had a powerful experience this week. We have experienced God bringing us together, and God leading us another step forward in our history. He is calling us anew for this time. I would like to use three symbols to describe what I recognise in this week's experience.

We met in the context of the questions raised around our founder, in a time of upheaval in the Church, in societies and of existential uncertainties. Paul speaks of the afflictions today in his letter to the Romans. We experience them first hand. We have also experienced that we can boast of these afflictions. Why? Because affliction brings about patience, but patience brings about probation, and probation brings hope, which does not let us perish, because God's love has been poured into our hearts. This word has an effect on me, as written for us today. The events surrounding Fr. Kentenich have brought about a maturing process in our family. We have created more transparency, have stood by each other in pain, have become more aware of our fragility and have also grown in humility. The truth of history sets us free when we face it and accept it with faith in God's guidance. We are still in the midst of this process. We have entered the Cenacle of Pentecost. This has given us new confidence. We continue to hope in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. An expression of this hope for the future is the new Pentecost window in the Founder Chapel. We have all been given such a window. It is the open window of the future. In it we carry the longing within us that the Pentecost event may always happen anew. We ask Mary to open our hearts to the many little Pentecosts we hope for.

**The second symbol is this drawing of the Church on the new shore.** Fr Kentenich often spoke of this. Images have been imprinted on it. For us it always had a prophetic character. I remember the photo with him at Lake Michigan. Now the insight has matured that the boat of the Church, even after many high waves, will arrive at this "New Shore". We are now in the time for which God called us into being. It is high time to get out of the boat, to leave the ark of certainties and to go ashore. And our Father and Founder is the first one who has already stepped out, who goes ahead of us with his daring and trust in God's guidance. He tells us through his attitude of faith: do not hesitate, do not doubt, do not be afraid! It is time to bring into the current church and society what has proven itself among us. It is the time for dialogue at all levels. It is the time for pioneers of co-creation of the new epoch. It is the time when our pride will be in how much we selflessly serve the renewal of the Church as Pope Francis describes it in *Evangelii gaudium*. "I dream of a missionary decision capable of transforming everything, so that habits, styles, schedules, use of language and every ecclesial structure become a channel more for the evangelisation of today's world than for self-preservation." (EG 27)

Setting processes in motion rather than owning spaces. It is a matter of promoting actions that generate a new dynamic in society. Let this be done without timidity, but with clear convictions and determination. (EG 223)

He who truly loves forgets himself, and seeks neither confirmation nor recognition, for love is always greater.

**The third symbol is the burning torch.** The older generation has passed it on to the younger. The torch stands for the fire that must always be rekindled. Life is ignited by life, Fr. Kentenich often said. It is about the transmission of life, the transmission of a rich

inheritance. It is the process of how personal motivation is born. At this Congress, it was not first a good idea, but a life process that we all participated in. It was probably due to the climate that developed between us. When the climate is right, the necessary things happen on their own, everyone gets involved, everyone sees where things can and must be done. You don't wait for orders and responsibilities. We have experienced a high level of participation of the generations and the different countries, a high degree of joint responsibility. "One for all, all for one" was said yesterday.

This helps us to better understand the mystery of the Triune God on this day. God wants our diversity. It is founded in him. It is good that we are different. If all life comes from the Triune God, then it is about seeing and developing the potential of our diversity and difference. Our image of unity means giving enough space to the different voices and tuning them to each other. We love the polyphony in which one voice does not prevail at the expense of the others.

This became particularly visible through the commitment of the young generation. Their willingness to take on responsibility right up to the reflection group awakens joy and pride. The root of the charism entrusted to us is the covenant of love. From this root, the charism must be purified, renewed, so that it can also unfold great fruitfulness tomorrow. So at the end I give the floor to Fr. Kentenich, who in a difficult hour of his life and of our history said the following:

"Our Lady has given us to one another. We want to remain faithful to one another: in one another, with one another, for one another in the heart of God. If we do not find ourselves there, that would be something terrible. We must find ourselves there! You must not think: We go to God, so we leave each other. I don't want to be just a guide either. No, we go together! That is also the case throughout eternity. What kind of wrong ideas are these, just to be signposts! We are together to set each other on fire. We belong to each other for time and eternity. Even in eternity we are in each other. It is a love one another from person to person, an eternal love one another. And in each other and with each other we will then look at the dear Mother of God and the and the Triune God." (Homily 31 May 1949).

P. Heinrich Walter