

1. I am happy to be with you here today. As Pope Francis likes to say, you are the “now of God” (*Christus Vivit*, n. 178). Yes, you are the now of the Church! Knowing this, I am delighted to speak with you about the things that really matter, which are always connected to the topic of love. I believe, the youth from San Antonio should be here: San Antonio...

2. Pope Francis has often reminded us that we need to keep in mind one fundamental reality: that we are the beloved sons and daughters of God; that God himself lives in us, and that the Holy Spirit has been given to us so we can be constantly transformed in His love.

3. If we doubt this message about God’s unconditional love for us, all we need to do is take a good look at a Crucifix. There we discover proof of the immense love God the Father has for all of us; a love that did not hesitate to allow his Son to die on the Cross for our salvation.

4. Looking at the Cross we know we can get up every day and ask for God’s help with the words “*Abba, Father!*” We know that his love sustains us and that his Spirit allows us to love Him and the whole human race with the same love He has given us.

5. A beautiful example of someone who knew about this way of life can be found in a woman, wife, mother, and apostle, for

whom I have great admiration; Blessed Concepción Cabrera, better known as “Conchita”. She became a widow with eight little children to take care of. She lived her life fully immersed in the love of God. Her whole existence was infused with His love and you can see through her writings and daily actions that she was truly a woman on fire with the Holy Spirit.

6. Throughout her life she witnessed how Jesus made Himself present in her existence through the Word of God, the sacraments especially the Mass and the works of charity.

She allowed God to do with her as He pleased.

She discovered herself transformed into likeness of Jesus.

7. Like Conchita, you and I are called to learn how to love God and our neighbor with the love of the Holy Spirit. This love will move us to identify ourselves more and more with Jesus Christ on the Cross and will transform us into a source of hope and joy for everyone around us. Yesterday several Priests with young men and women prayed for me: in the prayer they say the Holy Spirit is so dear to the Archbishop. Of course! I received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, Confirmation and Priesthood and as Bishop. He is the Breath of God.

8. Saint John the Evangelist said that God “does not ration His gift of the Spirit” (John 3:34).

How can we not feel full of hope and excitement if we know that the Holy Spirit is always there for us... ready to enter our lives with no limits so that we can become living witnesses of God’s love?

9. Let us remember Pentecost. Everyone who was in the upper room that day was a grown person. John was still young, like you. Everyone there had lived lives filled with sufferings and joys. So do you!

10. However, the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost represented for all of them a new birth; the beginning of the authentic Christian life for which they were called. Jesus told them, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22), and everything right there changed on the spot. Those who were afraid were suddenly filled with courage. Those who were hindered by sadness found themselves filled with immense joy. Those who were frozen in fear, took to the streets to boldly announce their words and spread the message of God's love. They were on fire with the Holy Spirit... and they changed the world forever!

11. We can ask ourselves why don't we live our lives fired up by the love of God? The answer to this important question lies in the fact that love is never forced on us. It is always within our reach, and God allows us to notice it all the time if we pay attention to it; nevertheless, if we want to live our lives on fire, we need to say yes to God's love all the time! We need to ask Him to send his Spirit upon us and transform us from within. Every day we must renew that encounter of love, knowing that Jesus and the Spirit will never fail us.

12. I will share a story with you about a priest in San Antonio. This priest had already been in hospital ministry prior to the onset of Covid-19. During the last two years of the pandemic, he worked tirelessly and for endless hours, every single day. He acted as a true servant of God, ministering to the sick, anointing patients, baptizing dying babies. He provided peace, comfort to the families of the sick and dying as well as the hospital staff. At times he had to minister virtually and did not hesitate to wear the PPE required by hospital. He did not have fear in his heart but love on his face as he encountered each person. He allowed himself, through his faith, to be moved by the Holy Spirit. There are many stories alike during these difficult years.

The same fire has to happen to all of us. The Holy Spirit will empower you to accompany the person that is being bullied at

school or on social media. Your love will reach out to the person that is rejected for being different.

Let us ask God to make it happen, here and now, at this very stadium. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to give us strength to recognize God in every human being! This is the upper room! Open your hearts to the Holy Spirit. Come, Holy Spirit, Come and change us!

May the Holy Spirit make himself present with all his strength in us so that nothing remains the same in our lives.

13. If we let this happen; if we allow it to happen to us today and every day of our lives, we will understand that the Holy Spirit is always within us; that we need Him to be our better selves, to grow, to be Church, and to do good for God's glory.

14. That is why I tell you with all certainty: *¡Animo!* Take heart! Be brave! Do not be afraid! The God that is madly in love with you did not give you "a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control" (2 Timothy 1:7).

15. Pope Francis recently talked about the important role that you have to play in the life of the Church and the world in the Encyclical Letter *Christus Vivit*. He said: "Dear young people, my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you,

outstripping all those who are slow or fearful. Keep running, “attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much, whom we adore in the Holy Eucharist and acknowledge in the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters. May the Holy Spirit urge you on as you run this race. The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith.” (*Christus Vivit*, n. 299).

16. At Pentecost we learn another important thing: Mary and the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit together *as Church*. They received the Spirit together that day, so that they could build a better world together. Their experience is not that of isolated individuals who received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit all alone. They were the Disciples of Christ; they were his Apostles, and yet they had to wait for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit within their community to start living as such. As St. Paul says, “and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:3)

17. What the Apostles experienced that day, Mary had been experiencing since her encounter with the Holy Spirit during the Annunciation. The day she said yes, Mary began her journey with Jesus and with us. She became the first disciple of Christ. The BEST disciple EVER! Mary, Jesus and humanity could not be separated. The Apostles began to be a “we”, called not only to live a personal transformation. They embraced the call to transform the community of believers. Mary was called, the

apostles were called, YOU are called, to transform the world. Pope Francis is asking us to build a synodal Church; to hear the call together, to act together, to serve together, to be faithful to God's plan till the end. Young men and women, we have been called to live with others as a community!

18. We are aware that our communities are afflicted by chaos. The pandemic and the divisions we experience make our common existence a difficult one. But it is there, in the midst of all that chaos, the Holy Spirit wants to shine and bestow his gifts. Let us allow Him to transform our lives and our world as he did at Pentecost. Let the Spirit become, as Father Félix Rougier used to say, "The soul of our soul." This has to happen to each one of us, but it also has to happen in our Church and our communities. We must allow ourselves to be inhabited by the Holy Spirit so that He might move us closer to God and our peers as He becomes the soul of our society.

19. In recent months we have seen the spectacle of erupting volcanoes in different parts of the world. We have seen how they light up and turn on everything they touch. We have seen how their action transforms reality. This image can help us understand the effect that the divine fire that Jesus brought to earth is called to transpire over and over again.

20. Jesus words: "I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!" The love of Jesus is like an eternal volcano of holiness and perfection. The Holy Spirit is precisely the divine fire God has sent to earth to transform it from generation to generation.

21. Let us allow the fire of that same Spirit to grow within us; let it burst and spill everywhere. Let us help others understand that they too are called to live ignited by the fire of this same love.

22. Nobody loves what they do not recognize, so we have to help others to understand that the Holy Spirit exists.

23. In the Acts of the Apostles we learn that many people who wanted to be close to God, were not aware of the Spirit: "Paul traveled through the interior of the country and (...) found some disciples. He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They answered him, "We have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit" (Acts 19:1-2).

Many people around us do not know that they "are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in (them)" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

24. Even after having received the Holy Spirit, the apostles and Mary did not stop experiencing fatigue or facing all sorts of

difficulties and challenges. The same thing happens in our lives. The world around us, packed with its ideologies and growing divisions, is constantly upon us. When challenged by them, we must always remember that the Holy Spirit is with us; that thanks to our relationship with Him, we can bring new light into the world. We can face all political, economic, social and cultural problems in a different way. Discern well with the Holy Spirit. In confusing times call for his direction. Your vocation in the Church, Marriage, Priesthood, Religious life. He will help you.

If we lose sight of the Love of God and the action of his Spirit, the problems of the world will overwhelm us. If we remain close to God, we will be able to say like Blessed Conchita: "with the grace of the Holy Spirit, I am ready to face anything and everything." All Saints speak that way.

Let us call now upon the Holy Spirit "¡Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!"

25. When this happens, we become a new Pentecost for others. We become a channel of the Holy Spirit that illuminates all our relationships and all of our encounters with others: in our family life, in our parish, with our friends, in our school, and in our work.

26. This way, we will be able to give a constant testimony of service.

27. From our personal experience of Pentecost, we set out to meet our brothers and sisters and share with them the love of our God. Let's us become, each and everyone one of us, an apostle of the Holy Spirit following the example of the blessed Mother. Remember she is "The best disciple, EVER!"

28. Let us call him frequently as she did at Pentecost: "¡Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!" "Come, Holy Spirit, come!" May our call begin in our lips, but may it soon become a true cry of the heart. May the Spirit transform us into his instruments in all of our encounters with others, allowing him to touch everyone we come across in our daily lives. Let us just obey the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit forms saints.

29. You, young people, are especially loved by God. He knows what you are capable of. Transform the world!

30. As we move on, we should not forget, "God did not send his Son, Jesus into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). So the field is all open for your work as disciples of the risen Lord, who wants everyone to be saved and come to the knowledge of His love. Don't you?

For this to happen, answer the call. Pray every morning, "Today, I want to start again!" "¡Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!"

31. I would like to finish this reflection with some words from Pope Francis that summarize what God, his Church, and the world need from you right now: “Young friends, don’t wait until tomorrow to contribute your energy, your audacity and your creativity to change our world. Your youth is not an “in-between time”. You are the now of God, and he wants you to bear fruit. For “it is in giving that we receive”. The best way to prepare a bright future is to experience the present as best we can, with commitment and generosity.” (*Christus Vivit*, n. 178).

Experience Pentecost with the first disciples; Mary and the apostles, and receive anew the gifts of the Holy Spirit; go to the upper room as often as you want. The Church needs an interior Pentecost in the hearts of her people. Interior Pentecosts need to happen all over the globe. Allow the root experience of receiving the Holy Spirit to enrich your passion and love for Jesus Christ and the Church! Allow yourself to be burned with the great love of God! Please stand and allow me to pray for you. May the Holy Spirit source of all purity of heart, communicate it to you through the cross; may the Spirit keep your body and soul ready to love and serve God in your Encounters with his people. Now go and fire up the world proclaiming Christ as Lord and King by the power of the Holy Spirit!

¡Viva Cristo Rey! ¡Viva!