



The Holy Spirit as Creator

Let us allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit—and thereby experience how new things can come into being where there was nothing before. The globally transmitted central divine service of the New Apostolic Church for Pentecost 2021 was based on this main thought.

The sermon of the international Church leader, Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider, was based on a passage from Romans 8: 14: “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” This passage was flanked by Bible readings from Joel 3: 1–2 and Ephesians 3: 14–21, both of which have to do with the outpouring and activity of the Holy Spirit. The divine service was celebrated in Zurich-Seebach, Switzerland, transmitted around the world by satellite and internet, and so made accessible to some nine million members.

Growing into the nature of Christ

Christian churches are often accused of trying to bind believers to themselves through threats of punishment or promises of redemption. “That is not our understanding of salvation,” emphasised the Church leader. Rather, the salvation for which we strive consists of becoming like Jesus Christ: sinless, peaceful, non-violent, self-determined, and perfectly loving.

The Holy Spirit works on this salvation in several ways, namely as the Spirit of creation, who allows the new creation in Christ to grow within us human beings, as

the Spirit of power, who does not force us, but rather leads and guides us, and as the Spirit of movement, who drives our ongoing development.

Trusting in the Holy Spirit

The sermon vividly explained the activity of the Holy Spirit as Creator: He creates things that were not there before, completely new, out of nothing, just as God created the world out of nothing.

On the one hand, the Chief Apostle applied this creative power to the personal life of the believers. Specifically, he addressed people who had suffered twists of fate or who had to endure unchanging life situations full of suffering and hardship. “Trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. He will prepare a way to bless you, to give you peace and even joy.”

On the other hand, on this occasion of Pentecost, the birthday celebration of the church, the Church leader also addressed certain aspects that concern the Church. He explained that some members want change, that others fear change, and that still others look back wistfully to the past. “It is the Holy Spirit who prompts us to move forward. And He always works within the framework that Jesus Christ has established.”

Collective pronouncement, collective promise

“Your will be done”—this line from the Lord’s Prayer gave the Chief Apostle the opportunity to make a special appeal to God’s children prior to the communal prayer and the celebration of Holy Communion: “May these collectively spoken words represent a collective promise,” said Chief Apostle Schneider, “namely to renounce our own interests in order to strengthen the unity of the Church. After all, “*Your* kingdom come.”

23 May 2021