

Lesson 14

PENTECOST AND THE PROCLAMATION OF FAITH



The day of Pentecost has arrived. The disciples, along with the holy mother, are waiting in prayer for gaining power from above. Suddenly there is a sound like the rush of a violent wind. This filled the house where they had gathered. **They saw flame like tongues staying over each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. By the gift of tongue they received from the Spirit, they began to talk in different languages** (Acts 2:1-4).

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. In that crowd of people who spoke different languages, each one heard the disciples speaking in each ones native language. They talked about the wonderful works of God. With out understanding the meaning of this they were amazed and astonished.

Peter's Sermon

At that time Peter got up and addressed them saying. Listen to what I say. These people are not drunk as you think. No this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: **God declares; 'In the last days I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams. In those days I will pour out my spirit' Even upon my slaves, both male and female, And they shall prophesy'** (Acts 2: 14-21; Joel 2: 28-29). Then, quoting from the Old Testament, Peter explained to them that Jesus was the Son of God, that through his passion and death he brought us salvation and that God the Father raised him from death. Peter concluded his long sermon with the words, "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36).

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and others what they should do. Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven" (Acts 2:38). Paying heed to his voice, about three thousand people joined them that very day. Day by day, the Lord went on saving more people and adding them to this community.

Thomas Apostle in India

The community of disciples set out in different directions to different parts of the earth. Apostle Thomas, called the Didimus, came to India. St. Thomas reached India in the year 52AD He disembarked in Kodungalloor, then called Musiris. In those days many Jews lived there. **On 21 November we commemorate the arrival of St. Thomas in India.**

The Seven Churches

It is believed by tradition that St. Thomas established seven churches in India. This should not be taken to imply that he built seven church buildings. What we should understand is that he laid the foundation for

Christian communities in seven places. **These seven places are; Niranam, Kollam, Palayoor, Nilackel, Koackamangalam, Koattackavu and Kodungalloor.** Another church supposed to have been built by St. Thomas at Thiruvithamkode is known as Arappally (half-a-church).

An unofficial book, '**The Acts of St. Thomas**', give much details about St. Thomas. This describes in detail how he came to India, how he preached the gospel and how he was martyred. Several ancient forms of art, unique to Syrian Christians, such as Margam Kali, Chavittu nadakam, Paricha muttu kali as well as some ancient songs, bear witness to the missionary work of St. Thomas in India.

In 72AD Thomas apostle was martyred in Chinna mala (little mount) of Mylapore, wounded by enemy's spear. He was buried in Periya mala (Big mount). The Indian Christian community commemorate this martyrdom on 3 July as a feast called **Dukrana**. In 1972, during the 19th centenary celebration of this, Pope Paul VI declared him the apostle of India.

Kaithäkkälam (Summer Season)

This period starts on the Sunday, seven weeks after Pentecost. That day is the feast of the twelve apostles who form the foundation of the church. The church that flourishes with strong roots in the works of these apostles gave birth to several saints and martyrs. **During this period we remember the growth of the church, a symbol of the kingdom of heaven, producing an abundance of fruits of sanctity.** The Syriac word **Kaitha** means '**summer**'. This period is also known as the season of fruits.

On the Fridays of this season we remember the saints and martyrs, the faithful children of the Church. This season motivates us to produce good fruits of sanctity.

Let us Pray

O! Jesus, like St. Thomas the Apostle who came to India to proclaim your Gospel, give us also the missionary zeal to proclaim your Gospel in India.

Read the Word of God and Narrate

Acts 2:1-47



Word of God for our Guidance

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts. 2:42)

Let us do

Write the names of seven churches established by St. Thomas the Apostle.

My Decision

I will live by doing good acts following the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

Let us find out the answer

1. Which prophecy of Prophet Joel was realized on the day of Pentecost?
2. What answer did Peter give to those who asked him: What shall we do now?
3. When and where did St. Thomas the Apostle land in India?
4. Which are the Ecclesial communities established by St. Thomas the Apostle?
5. What does the season of Kaitha remind us?