



*What
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HAVE YOU WONDERED what it meant when you saw extensive articles in *Pageant Magazine*, *The National Observer* and others upon the phenomenon of speaking in languages given by the Holy Spirit? Does it seem strange that Roman Catholic bookstores carry a book entitled *Catholic Pentecostals*? And what did you think about the *St. Anthony Messenger*, a Catholic magazine published by The Franciscan Fathers, carrying a cover picture of hands being laid upon a young man to "receive the Spirit" while others prayed in "tongues"? And what about scientific and psychological journals publishing articles on glossolalia? What does this mean?

To the man in the street it becomes increasingly confusing. How good it would be if we could talk to everyone buffeted by the barrage of literature and explain the simplicity of it all: Man lost God's fellowship way back in the beginning because he disobeyed the Creator of the Universe and insisted upon doing things his own way. God the Father found it necessary to punish man, not only as a father correcting a child, but also as One whose purity and righteousness cannot tolerate sin. And so man lost his fellowship with God and became subject to pain, sickness and death, as did his descendants. However, the Father in His mercy planned a way to redeem man which

satisfied justice by paying the price for man's disobedience, as well as gave him an opportunity to regain his original relationship with the Creator.

The way God chose was so startling that to this very day, nearly 2,000 years later, comparatively few mortals have been able to comprehend it. He sent someone else to suffer in man's stead the penalty of sin against God and bring about man's redemption. Because of His own compassion for man mingled with His inscrutable sense of justice, He sent that most dear to Him. In a way, He sent Himself, for He sent His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now this only child was not just a brand new infant. The Lord Jesus had been with the Father at the creation of the universe, ages ago, when the Holy Spirit had, at the Father's bidding, moved upon the face of the waters to bring into existence the world as we know it. But the Father (how hard it is for us to understand this incomparable miracle) caused His Son (also called the Lord of lords) to be born as a mere man child. In fact, to make it even more amazing, to be born to a devout Jewish woman who was betrothed but had not known a man. So God the Son came down to earth born of a Jewish virgin who had been overshadowed by God the Holy Spirit to bring about this miracle. From that day forth life on earth was so changed that even the very calendar is dated from that event.

At this time, few knew the secret. Mary, the mother knew because an angel had come to her and told her that she was to bear a child who was the Son of God. Joseph, her betrothed, knew because an angel had come to him in a dream and instructed him not to break the engagement—that Mary's forthcoming baby had been conceived by the Spirit of God. Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, knew because when she saw Mary, the child in Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist who was to foretell the coming of the Christ) leaped with joy. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, suddenly knew that Mary was to bear the Saviour.

After His birth others learned the secret. When Jesus was dedicated in the Temple the word of prophecy was given independently to two servants of God who spoke forth that the child was to grow to manhood and redeem Israel.

But for the most part those about knew nothing of the heritage and the fate to befall the little boy. Many must have judged Mary to be a sinful woman because of the pre-marital pregnancy, and considered Joseph without honor to have taken her to wife.

How peculiar it seems to us that the Son of God would come to the world under such unconventional circumstances, but how could it be otherwise? God the Son could not be conceived of human seed. And so the Christ Child was born of a virgin who

married a man in humble circumstances, and He arrived in a stable among the beasts of the field, for there was no room in the nearby Inn.

Others came to know the secret. Three Magi (wise men) in far off lands saw an unusual star in the heavens and followed it to the birthplace of the Lord. Shepherds in a field were visited by an angel who imparted the news of Jesus' birth and the same star directed them to the King of kings and Lord of lords, who had come to earth to save a sinsick world and now lay in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes.

The Lord Jesus grew to manhood in Nazareth and few there knew of the destiny that lay ahead for Him, but Mary remembered and hid the knowledge in her heart. When the time was come, at about the age of thirty, the Son of God chose His disciples and began to teach them and to preach to the multitudes who came to hear. He healed many sick people and did many miracles and the common people knew there was a prophet from God among them. However, the religious leaders of the day listened not, for they were hypocrites who loved to make religious observances for show but had unclean hearts within.

Then our Lord did what He had come into the world to do. He allowed the religious leaders and the Roman soldiers (and we ordinary folk, descendants of the

first man, and sinners all) to put Him to death — and such a death. Imagine God Himself (for the Son partakes of the Father) being crucified upon a cross (a death reserved for thieves and murderers) while the multitude humiliated, taunted and even spat upon Him. Thus God the Son bought for us our eternal life. Because of His sacrifice our sins have been paid for (yours and mine and all the other peoples'). All the Father requires in return is that we accept the sacrifice — that we acknowledge Jesus Christ His Son, as Lord, and believe in our hearts in the next miracle which is the resurrection. For three days after Jesus was crucified the Father brought Him back to life and He appeared to many people in the city of Jerusalem before He went up into Heaven to return to the Father. This was the final proof that the Prophet and Priest named Christ Jesus was also King and, of a truth, the Son of God. And the Father promised that all who accept this fact and repent of their sins and believe on Him shall live forever, and so it is unto this day.

But before our Lord returned to His Father He made provision for us, here, in order that we might not be without comfort. He promised to send to us the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit. After He went up into Heaven this came to pass as He had promised, for while the followers of Jesus were praying in a room upstairs one morning, the Holy Spirit swept over them and each found himself speaking in a

language he had not learned, but which had been given him by the Spirit.

These followers learned that when they prayed in this language amazing happenings occurred: They were comforted, for the Holy Spirit was praying through them; they were edified in their innermost beings, for they spoke mysteries unto the Father; they could intercede for others according to the will of God; sometimes men recognized the miracle and accepted Christ as Lord. But best of all they discovered that from the time the Spirit had first come upon them with this new language, they had a new love in their hearts for the poor, lost people who did not know that to live in fellowship with the Creator they had to know Jesus. With this new love came a boldness to talk about Christ to these people, and as they did signs, wonders and miracles followed them and they went everywhere telling of the love of the Father who sent the Son, of the Son who suffered and bled and died for man, and of the Holy Spirit who draws men to Christ, sanctifies them and dwells within their hearts.

We live in an unusual age — an age of fear and controversy; an age of delinquent children who do no honor to parents; an age of destruction of nation, race, home and the individual himself, by use of weapons ranging from atom bombs to narcotics. We live in an age where prayer is not only made ridiculous but strictly forbidden in many

places; an age where force and power and education are worshipped as gods.

How do we reach men in such an age? Perhaps we have erred by making it so very complicated when the truth is so uncompromisingly simple: accept Christ, receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit, live for God and experience the indescribable peace and joy that ultimately follows. God bless you as you tell others. †

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