

Historic Commentary

(Pentecost Sunday - Year B)



The Liturgy Letter

Commentary on John 15: 26-27; 16:4b-15 from Selected Church Fathers

[Thomas Aquinas' curated commentary on John 15](#), from a 13th century document called the [Catena Aurea](#) that contains compiled verse by verse commentary on the Gospels from the Patristics and others.

[Cyril of Jerusalem](#): He is called the Comforter because he comforts and encourages us and helps our infirmities. We do not know what we should pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself makes intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered, that is, he makes intercession to God. Very often, someone has been outraged and dishonored unjustly for the sake of Christ. Martyrdom is at hand; tortures on every side, and fire, and sword, and savage beasts and the pit. But the Holy Spirit softly whispers to him, "Wait on the Lord." What is now happening to you is a small matter; the reward will be great. Suffer a little while, and you will be with angels forever. "The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that shall be revealed in us." He portrays to the person the kingdom of heaven. He gives him a glimpse of the paradise of delight.

[Irenaeus](#): The Lord promised to send the Comforter who would join us to God. For as a compacted lump of dough cannot be formed of dry wheat without liquid, nor can a loaf possess unity, so, in the same way, neither could we, being many, be made one in Christ Jesus without the water from heaven. And as dry earth does not produce fruit unless it receives moisture, in the same way we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have produced life-bearing fruit without the voluntary rain from above.

[John of Damascus](#): We believe also in one Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and rests in the Son, the object of equal adoration and glorification with the Father and Son, since he is co-essential and co-eternal; the Spirit of God, direct, authoritative, the fountain of wisdom, and life and holiness; God existing and addressed along with Father and Son; uncreated, full, creative, all-ruling, all-effecting, all-powerful, of infinite power, Lord of all creation and not under any lord; deifying, not deified; filling, not filled; shared in, not sharing in; sanctifying, not sanctified; the intercessor, receiving the supplications of all; in all things like to the Father and Son: proceeding from the Father and communicated through the Son, participated in by all creation, through himself creating and investing with essence and sanctifying and maintaining the universe: having subsistence, existing in its own proper and peculiar subsistence, inseparable and indivisible from Father and Son, possessing all the qualities

that the Father and Son possess, except that of not being begotten or born. For the Father is without cause and unborn; since he is derived from nothing but derives from himself his being, nor does he derive a single quality from another. Rather, he is himself the beginning and cause of the existence of all things in a definite and natural manner. But the Son is derived from the Father after the manner of generation, and the Holy Spirit likewise is derived from the Father, yet not after the manner of generation but after that of procession. And we have learned that there is a difference between generation and procession, but the nature of that difference we in no wise understand. Further, the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit are simultaneous.