



JOINT PENTECOST 2023 MESSAGE

Since the outpouring of the Spirit to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection of the Lord, the Spirit has animated and guided churches and sustained and motivated Christians, collectively and individually.

Just as the early Christian community struggled to come up with answers to the problems it faced, so Christians today struggle with the challenges of a world deeply wounded by violence, inequality and division. As the brutal war against Ukraine rages on, the humanitarian crisis continues. Social and political consequences, along with economic inequalities, also continue to surface, exposing the polarisation and fragmentation of our societies.

However, much as the disciples of the early church were filled with the Holy Spirit (*Acts 2:4*), so Christians today are filled and guided by the Spirit. The life of the church is expressed in the action of the Spirit, revealed in the body of Christ and in the common journey of the people of God. Prayerfully trusting the Holy Spirit and walking together as Christians, the people of God gain a deeper understanding of the gospel and engage in transforming service for a righteous, peaceable and hopeful world. Signs of the Spirit of God living and working in our lives are witnessed, for example, in the churches' support of refugees. In this way, they respond to the humanitarian needs in Ukraine, express solidarity with the victims of this tragic war, and actively work for peace on the continent.

As we prepare to celebrate Pentecost this year, let us be open to receiving the Holy Spirit (*John 20:22*), whose power can heal and reconcile humanity and transform society. Let us pray for justice and peace and commit together in humility and hope to the Spirit of God who transforms and reconciles all.

May the same Spirit enlighten the minds of those who seek violence, and 'give them a heart of flesh' (*Ezek. 36:26*). May the feet of all be guided in the way of justice, truth, reconciliation and peace. May the Pentecost message to seek unity in diversity also inspire those bearing political responsibility in Europe, that their decisions be led by wisdom, integrity and compassion in the service of the common good of all.

As Presidents of COMECE and CEC, we also encourage prayers for our common witness and work for the good of the European project. CEC will be celebrating its General Assembly in Tallinn in a few weeks and will elect its new President and Governing Board. COMECE celebrated its General Assembly in Rome a few weeks ago and elected its new Presidency and Standing Committee for the next five years. Let us pray that the Spirit guides and illuminates all of us to be able to discern and join in life-giving action throughout Europe and the world.

A blessed Pentecost to all!

H.E. Mgr. Mariano Crociata
President of COMECE

Rev. Christian Krieger
President of CEC