

PENTECOST LOST AND FOUND

by Fr. Nick Smith

How I got lost at Pentecost
while on a trip abroad
Is quite a tale and never stale;
at least *I'm* always awed.

It's so far-fetched, I don't expect
you'd think that it were true,
but if you doubt, just hear me out.
I'll share it all with you.

A business trip by sailing ship
across to Palestine,
to sell some wares and trade for theirs;
it should have all gone fine.

But I forgot what I'd been taught
about their festive ways
Specifically what one would see
On Hebrew holidays.

This Pentecost, when I got lost,
was such a special time,
the Week of Weeks, which to us Greeks
Made just no sense nor rhyme.

Jerusalem, that's where they come,
Up to the temple mount
to pay respects as God's subjects;
More folks than I could count.

They clogged the streets like flocks of geese;
that's how I lost my way,
while pushed and tossed, around, across
the town that holiday.

I looked around and sadly found
I knew not where I stood.
I had survived but had arrived
in some strange neighborhood.

I'm such a dope! I asked with hope
Some guy who had a beard
who could not speak a word of Greek!
Then things got really weird.

I heard it first, a distant burst,
Like an explosive round;
though not forecast, a sudden blast
of wind swept through the town

And filled with dread, I turned my head
to face away from there,
but as it grew, that strong wind blew
it seemed from everywhere.

I tried to stand in swirling sand,
debris of every kind,
but had to fall against a wall
and huddled there resigned.

Then suddenly and luckily,
while taking such a toll,
that roaring rush became a hush
as if it found its goal.

And when I tried, eyes open wide,
to see what had occurred
I saw twelve men assembled then,
and this is what I heard:

One spoke real loud, addressed the crowd,
on behalf of all his crew.
I heard him preach in quite good Greek,
although he was a Jew!

How curious that various
languages were heard
when he spoke just the one he must.
All else would be absurd.

I know for fact that place was packed
with foreigners on end
yet it was odd that each would nod
as if they comprehend.

I thought maybe the words might be
oddly arbitrary,
that what was said was in my head;
but that would be too scary.

But here's the part that if you're smart
you'll find hard to accept:
a burning flame to each one came,
and o'er their heads it leapt.

I kid you not! I've seen a lot
while traveling overseas,
but those twelve guys, you realize,
just brought me to my knees!

I asked around; here's what I found:
Those twelve were Jews alright,
disciples, too, of one they knew
to be a godly light.

That one was killed, his blood was spilled.
but he came back to life
and promised all who heard his call
that he would ease their strife

He couldn't stay, he went away,
but seems he kept his word;
He sent, they say, that very day
The Spirit which us stirred.

Yes, all that gale and fiery sail
were meant to reassure
that gift of Christ which once sufficed
continues to endure.

The Jews, you know, tie quite a bow
'round all things spiritual.
Creation, plea, and prophecy
are in their ritual.

But such display of pow'r that day
was way outside the zone;
I saw the facts, the Spirit acts
in ways I'd never known

I must admit, to think of it,
that I'm just not the same.
What happened there gave me a scare,
but also lit a flame.

Sometimes I feel that it's so real
it warms and lights my way.
So, I got lost at Pentecost,
but thank God for that day! Amen