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## **PREACHER SAYS SPIRIT GIVES NEW CAPACITY TO LOVE**

### **Father Cantalamessa Delivers 2nd Lenten Sermon**

VATICAN CITY, MARCH 22, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Holy Spirit is the new law, working through charity in our hearts to enable us to be faithful to our love for God, says the preacher of the Pontifical Household.

Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa said this Friday in his second Lenten sermon for 2009, given to the Curia at the Vatican. The theme of the sermon was "The Law of the Spirit That Gives Life: The Holy Spirit, the New Law of Christians."

Pentecost, he pointed out, was not a new feast for the Jews, who celebrated the gift of the law on Mount Sinai and the covenant, but Jesus came to enrich the day with a new meaning.

The preacher asked, "What is meant by the fact that the Holy Spirit descends on the Church on the very day when Israel commemorated the gift of the law and the covenant?"

He answered that the Spirit descends on the apostles on the day of Pentecost "to point out that he is the new law, the spiritual law that seals the new and eternal covenant and that consecrates the royal and priestly people that are the Church."

Thus, he noted, the "law of the Spirit" is "the law that he inscribes in hearts on Pentecost."

Divine strength

Father Cantalamessa explained: "If it was enough to just proclaim the new will of God through the Gospel, it wouldn't explain what need there was for Jesus to die and the Holy Spirit to come.

"But the apostles themselves demonstrated that it was not enough; even though they heard everything, for example that we need to turn the cheek to those who strike us, during the passion they did not have the strength to follow any of Jesus' commandments."

He affirmed that this "new law that is the Spirit" works through love. He added, "This love is the love with which God loves us and by which, at the same time, we are made capable of loving him and our neighbor [...]; it is a new capacity for love."

The Holy Spirit, noted the preacher, "specifically love, is a 'law,' a 'commandment'" that "creates a dynamism within the Christian which bring him to do everything God wants, spontaneously, without even needing to think about it, because he has made God's will his own and he loves everything that God loves."

Love, he said, "cannot substitute the law," but it observes" it and fulfills it. "In fact," he added, "it is the only force that makes it be observed."

The priest continued: "If it is in fact true that love takes care of the law, it is also true that the law take care of love. In different ways the law is at the service of love and defends it."

He explained: "The man that loves, the more intensely he loves, the more he can see the dangers that his love is in; it is danger that does not come from others but from within himself.

"If fact, he knows well that he is changeable and that tomorrow, alas, he could grow tired and not love anymore.

"And since now that he is in love he sees clearly what an irreparable loss this would be, he guards against it by 'tying himself' to love with the law. In this way he anchors his act of love, which happens in time, to eternity."

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