

HOMILY for the FEAST of PENTECOST – Year ABC

This Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost. As I reflect on the Holy Spirit & its gifts to us, I'm reminded of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

One man in the choir could not sing a note in tune if his life depended on it. Several people hinted to him that he would make an excellent usher, but he continued to go to choir practice. The Choir Director & some members of the choir became desperate & pleaded with the pastor.

"You've got to get that man out of the choir, father," they begged. "If you don't, our Easter cantata will be ruined & the other choir members will quit. Please do something, father!"

So, the pastor went to the man & suggested, "Mr. Johnson, perhaps you should leave the choir."

"Why should I quit the choir?" he asked.

"Well, I hate to say this because I have no ear for music, but five or six people have told me that you can't sing."

"That's nothing, father," the man snorted. "Twenty-five people have told me that you can't preach!"

I don't think that pastor is me; & that choir member is not in our St. Mary Magdalen's Choir either! Anyway, this Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost to mark the coming of the Holy Spirit & let us know about the new phase of God's mission of soul saving. With the departure of Jesus, the coming of the Holy Spirit is the welcomed sign for the Christian community. They would not feel alone & abandoned. They would not have to face the world all by themselves. For the Holy Spirit would protect them & help them deal with a hostile world. It would show them what to do to continue Jesus' mission of soul saving & make it safely through this life. It would comfort them when they feel discouraged or scared on their journey of faith. It would inspire them to do more good things & avoid bad things in their daily life.

Surely the Holy Spirit would be the great blessing for the Christian community. Besides what I just shared with you above about the role of the Holy Spirit in the absence of Jesus, I believe that the Holy Spirit would be able to back up the testimony of the disciples with all sorts of miracles. In case you don't know, all the miracles that Jesus did during His ministry were done with the help of the Holy Spirit. He drove out evil spirits & healed people with all kinds of illness & diseases. He fed thousands of hungry mouths & constantly searched for lost souls to bring back to the fold. He brought comfort to the suffering & uplifted the outcast with hopeful messages. He reached out to the lowly with wise teachings like the Beatitudes & helped the public learn to forgive even when He was dying on the Cross. Jesus certainly could not do all those wonderful things without the help of the Holy Spirit. In fact, God the Father would not be able to create our beautiful, mysterious Universe without the involvement of the Holy Spirit. God the Father had to breathe the Holy Spirit into every creature of the new Creation to bring it to life. Without the Holy Spirit, our world would be dead.

Now we know how vital the Holy Spirit is in our daily life. Despite its important value in this world, we do not see the Holy Spirit every day. The only times that we have heard any description about the Holy Spirit were at the Baptism of Jesus & the Pentecost. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit took on the form of a dove & descended on Him. Or, when the disciples gathered in one room for fear of the authority, the Holy Spirit came

down on each of them in the form of a tongue of fire & inspired them to go to the world to share the Good News of the risen Christ. The Holy Spirit gave them courage & ability to speak in different languages to carry out that mission successfully. Without the Holy Spirit, the early disciples would never leave the upper room to witness the risen Christ to the world & risk their lives for it. In fact, they would not know what to do next with their lives.

As you can see, the Holy Spirit is vital within the Holy Trinity as well as the human family since the beginning of Creation. The Holy Trinity & the human family would not be the same without the presence of the Holy Spirit. We learn that the Holy Spirit can grant us some of its seven gifts to use in our daily life, such as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude/courage, knowledge, piety, & fear of the Lord. Those gifts can help us make the correct decisions & pick the right choices every day. They will lead us to a meaningful & joyous life. In case we still need the blessing of the Holy Spirit in our life, it can bring us its twelve wonderful fruits: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, & chastity. I don't know about you, but I think our world can use those fruits for its transformation from the current condition. For we currently see lots of anger & violence all over the land. Everyday we hear how people get mad about something & decide to take it out on everyone around them. Or, a small group of people might have a certain bias & choose to act in a hateful way toward their neighbors. Of course, we can ask the Holy Spirit to change our current world with its selfish & greedy attitude to be more generous & caring. What do you want the Holy Spirit to do for our current world?

I don't think our world can function & prosper with its current level of anger & hate. Our religious & political leaders have created such a toxic environment that their members cannot even talk to one another about anything anymore. Each group only cares about its own interests & focuses very little on the common good. We have practically had a civil war in our society as well our Church with all the political & social issues. That war has spilled its destructive power into our family life & personal life. No one cares to work for a healthy & stable family anymore. Most of the shooting & violent culprits have had their own dysfunctional, chaotic family life. Perhaps we can ask the Holy Spirit to bring into the heart of each person a kind & gentle spirit to replace what is currently in it. The Holy Spirit can also bless our society with a peaceful & generous spirit to drive away the mean & selfish attitude that we see right now. That way we can stop all the insane violence & explosive anger existing in our society & personal life now. Wouldn't that be a wonderful change for our world?

My dear brothers & sisters, the Holy Spirit has shown us a solid track record of many wonderful blessings that it has brought to the Holy Trinity & the human family since Creation. Having seen how evil spirits are at work in our world right now, we need to invite the Holy Spirit to come into our hearts, homes, & society to dispel those spirits. That way we can put an end to all the current violence & hatred & create a peaceful & loving environment for everyone to live & prosper.