

HOMILY for the FEAST of PENTECOST – Year ABC

The Feast of Pentecost reminds me of this cute story & what the little boy did in a store that I'd like to share with you.

The twelve-year-old boy stood patiently beside the clock counter while the store clerk waited on all the adult customers. Finally he got around to the youngster, who made his purchase & hurried out to the curb, where his father was impatiently waiting in his car.

"What took you so long, son?" he asked.

"The man waited on everybody in the store before me," the boy replied. "But I got even."

"I wound & set all the alarm clocks while I was waiting," the youngster explained happily. "Dad, it's going to be a mighty noisy place at eight o'clock!"

The Holy Spirit sure can make a place noisy like that when it comes! Anyway, this Sunday the Church celebrates the Feast of Pentecost. This feast marks the beginning of the Church & the new phase in the history of the human salvation. Today the Church was born & given the mission of going out into the world to baptize in the name of Jesus & convert nations. But, it did not have to carry out that mission all by itself. For the Holy Spirit would be sent to assist it in that challenging mission. So, what is it about the Holy Spirit that would give it that much power? Can we make good use of all the power of the Holy Spirit to deal with our daily challenges & change our world?

We often picture God the Father to be an elderly man with long white beard, God the Son a young man like Jesus, & God the Holy Spirit a white dove or the tongues of fire. Among the persons of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit is probably the most mysterious figure of all. It's difficult for us to imagine a white dove or tongues of fire that would be able to do wonders & bring about amazing miracles. But, the truth is that the Holy Spirit has been behind all the miracles since the creation of the world. The Holy Spirit assisted God the Father at the moment of Creation & brought about our mysterious & wonderful Universe. It has been two thousand years; & scientists have just scratched the surface of the discoveries of our Universe. The Holy Spirit also gave Jesus a helping hand with all the miracles that He did during His years of ministry. The Holy Spirit certainly had a hand in raising Jesus from the dead & ascending Him to Heaven.

Today's First Reading shares with us an amazing power that the Holy Spirit can bring us. It says, "When the day of Pentecost came, it found the brethren gathered in one place. Suddenly from up in the sky there came a noise like a strong, driving wind which was heard all through the house where they were seated. Tongues as of fire appeared which parted & came to rest on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to express themselves in foreign tongues & make bold proclamation as the Spirit prompted them." So, the Holy Spirit helped the early disciples speak in various foreign languages & make great prophecies about the future. Meanwhile, today's Second Reading reveals to us another secret about the Holy Spirit as following, "...There are different gifts but the same spirit... To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... All of us have been given to drink of the one spirit." So, Paul wants to remind us that we've been given different gifts & blessings in this life. All of those have been distributed differently to each & every one of us by the Holy Spirit. But, the Holy Spirit did not give us those to be kept all to ourselves. Rather, they should

be used for the common good. We must use our unique gifts to benefit our community & build up a peaceful & harmonious society. Has every human being used his/her unique gifts for the common good lately?

Over the century, we've seen how fights & wars break out because human beings have selfishly desired to keep those gifts all for themselves. They do not like to share their blessings with others. They certainly do not have any concern for the common good. They've even tried to take from others as much as possible. They've surely lived contrary to what Paul & the Holy Spirit would want them to do. That is why we've seen all sorts of uprisings & demonstrations around the world over the years, especially in recent years. If we look over to the Ukraine or around our American society these days, we can see that wars & fights have erupted because no one has had any concern for the common good. For example, President Putin only cares about grabbing more land even if he has to kill thousands of people & destroy countless innocent lives. If he has used God's gifts for him to serve the common good, we'd not have the horrible war going on in the Ukraine now. Similarly, all the fights & senseless shootings around our country would disappear if everyone would make some personal sacrifices & work for the common good. We would have a peaceful & harmonious society. Wouldn't you want that world for yourself & the future generations?

There is one more blessing that the Holy Spirit can give to each of us & our world. Today's Gospel lets us know about it as following, "...Jesus breathed on them & said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive one's sins, they're forgiven. If you hold them bound, they're held bound.'" In other words, the Holy Spirit can help us learn to forgive & reconcile with one another. We would try to put aside our past differences & work hard to make peace with people around us. We would always put a peaceful & harmonious community before our personal interests. We would do everything in our power to promote peace & harmony wherever we go. After all, that is why our Lord came & showed us how to reconcile with God the Father. He sacrificed His own life on the Cross to seek forgiveness & reconcile with God the Father. Shouldn't we imitate Him & learn to forgive & reconcile with one another? Shouldn't we desire & work hard for a peaceful & harmonious society?

My dear brothers & sisters, we have seen lots of wonderful gifts & blessings that the Holy Spirit could bring us & our community. Surely the Holy Spirit could do a lot more for each of us & our society. Facing a dividing society & an increasing number of shootings & violent incidents around our country, what should we ask the Holy Spirit to bring it at this moment? What must we do to create a peaceful & harmonious society around us?