

HOMILY for FEAST of PENTECOST – Year ABC

On this Feast of Pentecost, I'm reminded of the work of the Holy Spirit through this favorite cute story of mine that I'd like to share with you.

Every morning an elderly woman would step out on her porch, raise her arms to Heaven, & shout, "Praise God!"

An atheist happened to buy the house next door to her, & over the months he became very irritated with the spiritual woman. After six months of hearing her shout "Praise God" each morning, he went outside on his porch one day & yelled, "There is no God!"

The godly woman wasn't put off in the least. She continued to praise God every day. One cold winter morning, the atheist heard the woman shout a different message.

"Help me, Lord," the woman prayed. "It's very cold & I am out of food & money."

When the woman went outside the next morning, there was enough food on the porch to last her a month.

"Praise God!" she shouted.

The atheist stepped out from the bushes & said, "There is no God! I bought all of those groceries for you!"

The woman raised her arms to the sky & said, "Praise God! You sent me groceries & made the devil pay for them!"

We might not see the Holy Spirit with our human eyes. But, we are able to recognize its presence like the act of kindness & generosity in the cute story above. We might not understand the way the Holy Spirit works in our daily life. But, we know that we couldn't survive in this world without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like the air we breathe or the refreshing water that nourishes us every day. Without the air or the refreshing water, we will not be able to survive a moment in this world. That is why Jesus once said, "The Spirit is like the air/wind. It blows where it wishes, & you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So, is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8) Evidently the Holy Spirit is mysterious & yet an important part of our daily life. That is why we are invited to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost this Sunday to mark the coming of the Holy Spirit.

This Sunday's First Reading helps us see the first blessing that the Holy Spirit brought the early disciples/Church as following, "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, we have been told how the early Church received the Holy Spirit & what the early disciples got from the Holy Spirit. One of the blessings that the Holy Spirit gave the early disciples was their linguistic ability. We have often taken for granted our ability to communicate with one another across languages, cultures, and customs. Without the Holy Spirit, we would remain apart & not be able to communicate with one another. The Holy Spirit connects us with one another & bring peace & unity to the community. A disordered community & chaotic society sure need help & guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But, that is not all the Holy Spirit would bring us. Last Sunday, I shared that the Holy Spirit gives us seven Gifts, twelve Fruits, & three Theological Virtues. Those seven Gifts are

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord. The twelve Fruits are Charity/Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-Control, & Chastity. The three Theological Virtues are Faith, Hope, & Charity/Love. Those are some wonderful blessings that the Holy Spirit would bring us & add flavors to our lives. Unfortunately, we have not realized their great potentials & made good use of them. If we know how to maximize the blessings of the Holy Spirit every day, our lives would be filled with God's presence & miracles. Imagine if we know how to use the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, our daily decisions would be wise & assuring because we believe that we are doing God's will. Imagine if we could rely on the three Theological Virtues to guide our lives, nothing in this world would scare or worry us. Or, imagine if we are able to make the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit a part of our daily life, it is not only our lives but also our world that would be totally transformed & prosperous.

Let us try to examine the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit individually & see their effects in our daily life. If we have a friend who is charitable/loving, we would benefit a lot from it & act the same way. If we have a friend who is joyous, we would feel the same way & behave like that person all the time. If we have a friend who is peaceful, we would share the same attitude & act the same way. If we have a friend who is patient & kind, we would benefit a lot from it & behave the same way. If we have a friend who always shows goodness & generosity, that same attitude would rub on us & eventually become ours. If we have a friend who always acts gently, we would tend to do the same. If we have a friend who makes faithfulness & chastity the important values of one's life, we do not only admire them but also want to make them part of our lives too. If we have a friend who acts modestly & has a good sense of self-control, it would fascinate us & make us do the same. As you can see, the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit would bring positive influences to our lives & the ones of people around us as well. If they have that much transformative power over an individual, can you imagine all the benefits & blessings that the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit would bring to our world? One thing for sure is that they would transform our current world to a better one, almost like the one in Heaven.

One more blessing that Jesus promised the Holy Spirit would bring to our world as being reported in this Sunday's Gospel is forgiveness & reconciliation. We might not realize how important that blessing is to our world. But, we cannot move forward each day if we could not forgive ourselves & reconcile with one another. In fact, Jesus came down to earth to forgive our sins & reconcile us with God the Father. That is how He would save our world & prepare it for Heaven. Likewise, we should imitate Jesus & rely on the Holy Spirit to help us learn to forgive & help the world reconcile with one another. That is how we can get ourselves & the world on the right path to Heaven.

My dear brothers & sisters, the Holy Spirit could bring us all sorts of blessings. I would like to suggest us to focus to the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit & make some of them a part of our daily life. I assure you that our lives will be gradually changed for the better. Moreover, let us try to help our world make the twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit part of its life also. That is how we could transform our current world to the one of Heaven with the help of the Holy Spirit.