

Pentecost A - 2023

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The gift of fortitude:

A mother refused to permit her little boy to go for a picnic with his classmates. On the day of the picnic, however, she changed her mind and gave him permission. But he sighed and confessed, "It's too late Mummy! I've already prayed for rain on the school picnic day!"

Treasure within:

An old beggar lay on his deathbed. His last words were to his young son who had been his constant companion during his begging trips. "Dear son," he said, "I have nothing to give you except a cotton bag and a dirty bronze bowl which I got in my younger days from the junk yard of a rich lady." After his father's death, the boy continued begging, using the bowl his father had given him. One day a gold merchant dropped a coin in the boy's bowl and he was surprised to hear a familiar ring. "Let me check your bowl," the merchant said. To his great surprise, he found that the beggar's bowl was made of pure gold. "My dear young man," he said, "why do you waste your time begging? You are a rich man. That bowl of yours is worth at least thirty thousand dollars."

We Christians are often like this beggar boy who failed to recognize and appreciate the value of his bowl. We fail to appreciate the infinite worth of the Holy Spirit living within us, making each of us His Temple and sharing His gifts, fruits, and charisms with us.

On this major feast day, we are invited to experience and appreciate the transforming, sanctifying, and strengthening presence of the Holy Spirit within us. This is also a day for us to renew our promises made to God during our Baptism and Confirmation, to profess our Faith, and to practice it.

The Holy Spirit clean-up job:

The Holy Spirit not only gives life but even brings dead bones to life. In Greek mythology, we read about the demi-god Hercules, son of Zeus and Alcmena. He was noted for his strength and was commanded by the King (whom he was serving in expiation of a crime), to clean the stables of Augeas, which housed 3000 oxen. The stable had not been cleaned for 30 years and Hercules was told to do the job within a day. This was a *herculean* job to complete. He could not do it by his own enormous power, so he directed the river Alpheus to run through the stable and so completed the task.

The apostles themselves did a great job of cleaning and giving life to people by serving as conduits for the Holy Spirit Who moved through the Apostles and into all who were willing to listen to their words and receive Him into their lives. (Elias Dias in *Divine Stories for Families*).

"Did you and Grandma ever get into any fights?"

A little girl asked her grandfather, "Did you and Grandma ever get into any fights?" The grandfather replied: "We don't talk about it very often, but there was a time when we were not getting along very well. We seemed to be picking on each other a lot and finding all kinds of things to argue about and really getting on one another's nerves. Well, one day I came in from the garden and I heard a voice upstairs. I went to the stairs and heard your grandmother telling God what she could not bring herself to tell me." "Well, what did you do?" asked the granddaughter.

"I quietly walked up the stairs," he replied, "and knelt down beside her and told God my side of the story. And from that day to this, we have never had a problem which we couldn't resolve by talking it over with each other and with God."

Do you think the Holy Spirit was active in that couples' marriage? There can be no doubt. Conflict will always remain part of every relationship. The fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control - will always remain critical for happy relationships with others.