

Pentecost Sunday
May 20, 2018

Scripture Readings

Acts 2:1-11

Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

John 20:19-23

H-a-p-p-y B-i-r-t-h-d-a-y! *It's Party Time...* and who wouldn't love a party filled with wind, fire, speaking in tongues and a bold proclamation of the Gospel?! Today, the whole Church celebrates the great Feast of Pentecost...the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is the official birthdate of the Church and it always falls on the seventh Sunday after Easter. The word itself comes from the Greek translation for "fifty days," and is the launch of the Catholic Church.

The disciples and other followers of Jesus were re-grouping and discerning what a life of faith together looked like now, after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. Jesus promised to give their gathered community the gift of the spirit...and wow, does that gift arrive in grand style. Scripture tells us that 120 followers gathered and prayed together waiting for the Holy Spirit to come as Jesus promised. Today, in the Twitter era, having 120 followers doesn't sound that impressive. However, to gain the attention and the trust of that many people without the help of any media tools, is fairly amazing. Jesus' Good News goes viral on the first Pentecost.

So what actually happens at Pentecost? God through the Spirit, chooses to meet us where we are, in the midst of a multitude of languages and experiences. The Spirit translates the Gospel instantly into countless languages. This is no small feat. If you've ever tried learning a new language, then you know that you can't just substitute one word in one language for a corresponding word in another language. Language is messy and intricate. Even when we speak the same language, there are times when we still have a hard time understanding one another. Imagine then the miracle of Pentecost and what it means for us today. God meets us where we are, in the messiness of different languages, and doesn't ask us to speak His language.

Prior to Christ's death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit was unavailable to mankind; but now He is being poured out on all the baptized for our benefit and grace. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity (and God), now takes up His role in God's plan of Salvation. After Jesus established the groundwork for the Church and left it in the hands of His apostles, He promised to remain with them forever. This could not be done in the physical form because His human nature was subject to the limitations of all human beings. So, Jesus is with us in the spiritual form of the Holy Spirit and will continue to be with the Church (the People of God) forever.

The Holy Spirit's role is to guide and guard the institutional Church, but also each of us individually, back to the Father to be united with Him forever in Heaven, when our time here on earth is done. This sounds clear and easy enough, unfortunately, many of us fail to listen to the Holy Spirit, who is simply just trying to help navigate our paths. Such neglect is

the cause of most of our worldly, as well as, personal problems. We are encouraged to pray to the Holy Spirit for His guidance and direction and to seek to understand what it is that He would like from us as our part in His Plan of Salvation. That, of course, is only the beginning. After praying for enlightenment and guidance, we then must be open to following through with whatever it is that is being asked of us...not an easy task!

(Taken from our Faith Formation Pflaum Weeklies Curriculum)

Let us pray for the help we need to share the Spirit within us.

When fighting seems like the way to go-
Help us offer a handshake in peace.

When others walk away from a newcomer-
Direct our feet toward friendship.

When we don't want to understand-
Open our eyes to another's point of view.

When we'd rather ignore our parents-
Give us ears to hear their concerns for us.

When put-downs seem smart-
Give us tongues that encourage.

When we want to be tough-
Give us hearts that are gentle.

We are sent to be new apostles. Go forth to spread Jesus' love and forgiveness in your own time and place. Amen.

Birthday Blessings,

Janice Anderson