

May 31, 2009

Pentecost Sunday (Mass during the Day)

Reading 1

[Acts 2:1-11](#)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
they were all in one place together.
And suddenly there came from the sky
a noise like a strong driving wind,
and it filled the entire house in which they were.
Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,
which parted and came to rest on each one of them.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.
At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd,
but they were confused
because each one heard them speaking in his own language.
They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
"Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?
Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?
We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene,
as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues
of the mighty acts of God."

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34](#)

R. (cf. 30) **Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

or:

R. Alleluia.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O Lord!
the earth is full of your creatures;

R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

or:

R. Alleluia.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD be glad in his works!
Pleasing to him be my theme;
I will be glad in the LORD.

R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

or:

R. Alleluia.

If you take away their breath, they perish
and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth.

R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

or:

R. Alleluia.

Reading II

[1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13](#) or [Gal 5:16-25](#)

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

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;
there are different forms of service but the same Lord;
there are different workings but the same God
who produces all of them in everyone.
To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for some benefit.

As a body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,
so also Christ.

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,
whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,
and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

or

Gal 5:16-25

Brothers and sisters, live by the Spirit
and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh.
For the flesh has desires against the Spirit,
and the Spirit against the flesh;
these are opposed to each other,
so that you may not do what you want.
But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.
Now the works of the flesh are obvious:
immorality, impurity, lust, idolatry,
sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy,
outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness,
dissensions, factions, occasions of envy,
drinking bouts, orgies, and the like.
I warn you, as I warned you before,
that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, generosity,

faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
Against such there is no law.
Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their flesh
with its passions and desires.
If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.

Gospel

[Jn 20:19-23](#) or [Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15](#)

Jn 20:19-23

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, "Peace be with you."
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
"Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained."

or

Jn 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Jesus said to his disciples:
"When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father,
the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father,
he will testify to me.
And you also testify,
because you have been with me from the beginning.

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.
But when he comes, the Spirit of truth,
he will guide you to all truth.
He will not speak on his own,
but he will speak what he hears,
and will declare to you the things that are coming.
He will glorify me,
because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.
Everything that the Father has is mine;
for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine
and declare it to you."

HOMILY

Today we celebrate Pentecost, fifty days since the Lord's Resurrection. This is the feast of the descent of God's Holy Spirit on the gathered disciples and the event of the birth of that community that we call Church.

As an infant only vaguely portends the adult that is to follow, so too with that early community. It took a couple of centuries for a Church, as we know it, to develop, but the infant was the father-mother of the adult.

Our first reading from the Acts of the Apostles gives an eye witness account of that first Pentecost. At the risk of sounding like a bad pun, notice how this reading describes a truly spirit filled rally: a noise like a strong, driving wind; tongues as of fire; speaking in tongues; a large crowd; excitement-wonder-rejoicing. Pentecost has a different feel to it than the Last Supper or the Crucifixion or even the Resurrection.

The disciples evidence a unity, a confidence, an immediate understanding of what is happening. They are enflamed by God's Spirit with a courage and singleness of spirit that captures the attention of the crowd. There is a maturity of comprehension and a cohesiveness of action here that was not present in any of the earlier occasions.

In the Gospel, we heard Jesus promise this happening to the disciples. The Advocate, the Spirit of truth, would be the guide to all the truth that Jesus could not speak of at that time because the disciples could not bear it. This Spirit of God the Father and of Jesus would be the disciples' support, their nurturance, their own spirits. The Pentecost arrival of this Spirit changed the disciples. The Spirit forged a community of shared belief and stiffened the backbone and courage of this gathering.

As the second reading from Paul to the Corinthians points out: "No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." But the community of those who believed Jesus to be the Lord, the Christ, the Messiah was not a bunch of automatons, robotically programmed to the same voice, speech, action. Rather, this community manifested God's Spirit each in different ways, with different gifts, in different forms of service. "Different workings but the same Lord who produces all of them in everyone." Like a body with many parts each with its own function, this community thrived on its diverse Spirit-filled members but remained one body in the one Spirit of Christ.

The excitement, wonder, frenzy that God's Spirit birthed in that gathering in Jerusalem is what we pray to be renewed in this community today. Just as high schools and colleges have pep rallies before big games with the purpose of revving up school spirit, so too we have this annual celebration of Pentecost to renew our awareness of God's Spirit and to rev up our response to the Spirit's promptings.

We tend to forget and not to notice that we are an exciting community that play an important part in each one of our individual lives. When we gather each week, we in deed energize and support each other in our beliefs and in living as Christ's disciples. We are all different and bring diverse gifts to this gathering, and together we can do and do amazing things.

Our care and concern for one another, our outreach to those in need in Oakland, Guatemala and around the world, our prayer and support of each other make this a truly significant community in our lives. For the most part, we sit in the same pew each week. We care about those in that little neighborhood. Those who take the time before or after our services to chat with others who are here or at the hospitality table have all sorts of Church friends.

This is what this community is all about. God's Spirit moving in us makes all of us one in that Spirit, and that is a marvelous thing. Today, we revel in God's spirit and renew our attention to the Holy Spirit's importance in the way we live. May this Pentecost renew the hearts and minds and spirits of all of us, faith-filled believers!

As we continue this Pentecost thanksgiving, let us praise God for the magnificent gift of God's Holy Spirit, and let us give God thanks by allowing that Holy Spirit to continue to become our own.

Rev. Timothy K. Johnson