

Pentecost Sunday (June 8/9, 2019)

Happy Birthday ! It is Pentecostthe day that celebrates the birth of the Church. Wow what a celebration it was on that day! Why not celebrate it with life and energy today? It was a very powerful experience on that day. They were all together “and suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong 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 filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.”

Wow, what an interesting experience ! Imagine if the very same were to happen to us today! What would your reaction be? Would you be scared? Terrified? Or, would you be grateful?

I am sure the Apostles were intensely grateful, perhaps scared, but definitely grateful. They had been awaiting this gift in fear and trepidation....locked away for fear of the Jews. Remember what was made clear in last week's 1st Reading Jesus' instruction was so very clear “He enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father.” The instruction was very clear ‘don't try to take on this Mission of proclaiming the Kingdom, without this gift I have for you The Holy Spirit !

It wasn't just a matter of the Church being formed, or born, it was a matter of the Hebrew Scriptures being fulfilled. The great gift of Pentecost was a restoration of the lost unity. It was reversing the disunity and confusion that began in the first Book of the Bible and the story of the Tower of Babel. Remember the story in the 11th Chapter in Genesis: “The whole world spoke the same language, using the same words. While men were migrating in the East, they came upon a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. They said to one another, ‘Come, let us mold bricks and harden them with fire.’ They used bricks for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky, and so make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered all over the earth.’”

Wow what a novel idea ! WE can make our own way to God.....Certainly not God's plan ! It is clear that Pentecost is a declaration of God's plan The way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, and He has given us the gift of His Holy Spirit, His parting gift to His followers so that we can live in Him.

A Hermit in the deserts of Egypt long ago wrote : “The heart directs and governs all the organs of the body. And when Grace pastures the heart, it rules over all the members and the thoughts. For there, in the heart, the mind abides as well as all of the thoughts of the soul and its hopes. This is how Grace penetrates throughout all

parts of the body.” What he was saying is that the heart is that place where a person’s spirit and the Spirit of God exist together. The mind, which is the source of rational thought, is made complete when it abides in the heart! And although our mind is an essential part of who we are, we are at our best when our minds and hearts are at one.

This is what makes the body of Christ at one as well. It provides us the perfect communion that Jesus is offering us. Just as the Tower of Babel represented the people’s thoughts of how they might reach God, the story goes on to say: “The Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men had built. Then the Lord said: ‘If now, while they are one people, all speaking the same language, they have started to do this, nothing will later stop them from doing whatever they presume to do.’”

So God’s plan is coming into view. But, it is most fully established in the birth of His Son in our world, who lives among us and teaches us all things about the Father. When He prepares to depart this world, He does not abandon us but promises us the gift that will teach us and remind us of all that He has told us. The gift of the Holy Spirit ! The Advocate, I like that term we all know the meaning and value of such a gift. An Advocate is one who pleads our cause, one who stands beside us, one who supports and comforts us in times of need. One who speaks on our behalf when we are unable, or unwilling to speak on our own behalf. One who gives us sound advice, and direction.

It is clear to see the power and influence He had on the fledgling Church, Mary and the Eleven in the Upper Room. Why would He not do the same for you and me? It is His Promise ! Will He not be faithful to His promise?!

Let us pray in this Eucharist, that He will pour out His Spirit upon us in a new and powerful way and that He will remove any obstacles in my life, that would prevent me from receiving His Abundance !

— Fr. Gerry Hurley