

Pentecost -

Pentecost 2022 Grad Mass 1st Second Reading & 2nd Gospel reading
In the Jewish tradition, Pentecost was the feast celebrating the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

Luke capitalizes on this tradition.

For Luke the universal event was not the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai,
but the giving of the Holy Spirit.

This universal event has religious and historical ramifications;
it has undone the division that resulted,

when the men of the earth were all given different languages,
when they attempted to build the tower of Babel.

The whole story of the tower of Babel was a story about humanity's attempt to take heaven by force.

God prevented that attempt by causing a glitch in their communication,
giving them all different languages, so they could not complete the tower.

Now we know there isn't enough material on earth to build a tower to heaven,
so God had nothing to be afraid of.

But it was a good lesson on how division separates us.

The whole story of Pentecost, indeed the whole of the Paschal Mystery,
is a story of God's attempt to remake us into one...one people, one language, one body.

On Wednesday the gospel reading was the great prayer of Jesus,
"Father may they be one as we are one."

Now it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see that we are not yet one,
that divisions that still exist in the world: 1) The war in the Ukraine,
2) The division between the rich and the poor,
3) Countries with an abundance of resources and those with none.
4) the prejudice that accompanies racism—are only a few.

And these divisions are still keeping us apart.

As long as there is an "Us" and "Them" mentality, there will always be division.

But the Good News is that we are one.

The Gift of Tongues that has reversed the effects of the Tower of Babel.

The point Paul was making in the second reading,

"There are a variety of Gifts, Services and Activities--but the same Lord...
and each is given for the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

He also notes that there is one body, one Spirit,
and every time we celebrate the Eucharist we pray, "Our Father."

Our father...one Father...one family.

Because we are one body, when one part suffers, we all suffer;
and when one part rejoices, we all rejoice.

This oneness is the workings of the Holy Spirit,

but the action of the Holy Spirit is not magic...mysterious maybe...but not magic.

What the Holy Spirit did for the disciples was to imbue them with courage and boldness,
so that they were able to overcome their fear and timidity.

From being a group of scared individuals, huddled in fear,
to a bold group who had a mission and a message for the world.

A mission that has not changed in twenty centuries...
to proclaim the Good News to the ends of the earth.

That same Spirit, that same courage and strength was given to each of us at our baptisms
and sealed within us at our confirmation.

We need to remember that the gift of the Holy Spirit is not just for a single moment,
the Holy Spirit accompanies us on our journey, in the footsteps of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power and courage to participate in the work of Jesus.

Our problem is that we don't believe this.

Oh, we believe that that we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit,
but we don't believe that the Holy Spirit was given to us for the common good.

We don't believe that we have been given any gifts that could be of any possible use
to build up the greater community.

And because we believe this we don't do anything.

I love the quote by Marianne Williamson,

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?'

Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around
you. We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.

It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,

we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

The power that changed the apostles is available to us.

The Holy Spirit awakens us to the mysterious power within us,

bids us to live life to the fullest,

and helps us grow into the person we were created to be.

The Holy Spirit is by no means a Spirit of timidity, but a Spirit of boldness and power.

We all have the capacity for goodness.

We all have hands that can care,	eyes that can see,
ears that can hear,	tongues that can speak,
feet that can walk,	and hearts that can love.

Admittedly we all have handicaps within us:

fear,	lack of self-worth,	intimidation,
hearts that have been hurt,		broken relationship;
and each of these handicaps can keep us from realizing our true selves;		

which is why we need to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit
and not the promptings of the evil one.

The spirit always builds us up,
the evil one is only concerned with tearing us down.

The death of Jesus left the apostles wounded in Spirit.

It appeared that the evil one had triumphed.

However, the resurrection of Jesus revived them...God had indeed triumphed.

On Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles, individually and collectively.

Imbued with the power of the Holy Spirit

they set out to continue the mission and a message that Jesus had given them.

We can never forget that that same Spirit has been given to us

to continue his mission and message.

To _____ and _____

It will be your duty to teach your children what it means that

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

To teach them what it means to be part of the Christian Community,

what it means that they are part of the one body of Christ.

This is an awesome responsibility,

which is why you need to continually remind your children

that they were baptized on the feast of Pentecost.

That they have been filled with the Holy Spirit.