

Homily by Fr. Anthony Davis

“Receive the Holy Spirit”.

May 31, 2020

The Feast of Pentecost (Year A)

Acts 2:1-11; I Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13; Jn.20:19-23

By the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Christ's Paschal Mystery was brought completion. For Christians world-wide, it is a memorial of the day the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles and the Virgin Mary in the form of fiery tongues- an event that took place fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus. Thus, the main theme of today's readings is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is something to be shared with others. In other words, we are reminded that the gift of the Holy Spirit moves its recipients to action and inspires them to share this gift with others.

When I sometimes ask people some people what faith or religion they belong to, they often answer, “We don't believe in any organized religion, but we are Spiritual People.”

I usually don't push further, but I often wonder what “SPIRITUAL” means to them. Anyone who believes in an Omnipotent and Omniscient God, is spiritual in some sense, whether they are pagans, Hindus, Buddhists or Moslems. Even our radical Moslem brethren who go around beheading and bombing people in the name of Allah consider and believe in themselves as spiritual people conducting a spiritual act called “JIHAD”. Even demons are spiritual because that's what they are made of-“Spirit”.

Thus being “Spiritual” says nothing much special about us. What matters is, whether we let God's Holy Spirit who connects us to the Father, His son Jesus, and the community of believers, actually, lead us in our actions. Hence St. Paul points stress that: “...To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, so all parts, though many, are one body...But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them to us as he wills”. (1Cor. 12: 4-11).

That is what St. Paul calls “The gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit”. His list begins with LOVE (not just any kind of love, but a generous, giving kind of Love-“AGAPE LOVE”). Then he goes on to mention *Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control* (Gal.6:22-23).

SUMMARY: what does the Holy Spirit do for us? The Holy Spirit, the Helper is quietly at work: in the sincere concern of a friend for our health; in the generosity of those who give us so much help; in the inner strength we discover in times of crisis; in those moments when we admit that we have been wrong; in making a tough choice; in the resilience of people who face one tragedy after another; in difficult and uncertain times when we have dared to love even though it was hard to do so.

Conclusion: Today, Jesus greets us in the comfort of our locked rooms, where we hide from the realities of our wounded lives and broken world, and he offer us “PEACE”. In that peace we are given the courage to unlock the doors and meet the world outside. We receive the Holy Spirit, which allows us to forgive ourselves and show others how to do the same, in the name of a liberation God. Therefore, our invitation today is to welcome the Holy Spirit, and to be open to the ways in which we can and will be changed-and through us, how the world can be healed, renewed, and transformed. And so “Receive the Holy Spirit”, in Jesus' Mighty Name! AMEN.

Let's remember the song by Fr. Carey Landry based on Rom.8:14-17: “Everyone moved by the Spirit is a son and daughter of God. Led by the power of his love, we will live in the light of the Lord (2x)...”