

Pentecost Sunday, 23 May 2021

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 12:3-7,12-13;  
John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Homily: Fr. Ken

Today we celebrate the feast of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church worldwide. And we also celebrate the feast of St. Rita, the patroness of our parish. And last evening we celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation for the students of our Religious Education Program.

For this Pentecost Sunday, the Gospel narration reveals Jesus appearing to the disciples after the Resurrection. Jesus gifts them with the Holy Spirit, and sends them out into the world to evangelize all humanity.

The first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, is the story of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came into the lives of the disciples. They were totally energized. Remember the scene: hundreds of thousands of Jews from all over the Middle East have converged on Jerusalem for the annual Passover Feast. They stayed on a few weeks later. Then, at this moment, they all heard a tremendously loud sound and went over to where the disciples were hiding out in fear. Inside, the presence of the Holy Spirit suddenly changed the disciples' lives. They were no longer frightened; they were filled with courage and energy to go and spread the message of Jesus Christ. This group of Galileans were suddenly speaking so many different languages that everyone was able to understand. That day, Pentecost, was the very birth of the Catholic Church.

For 2,000 years worldwide, and for the 91 years of our St. Rita parish, Christians have spread love, peace, and justice for all peoples. We have brought much joy and hope to others.

But there has been a cost. Christians worldwide have given their all, including their lives, as Jesus did, from the very worst

persecutions under the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Emperor Diocletian right up to today. In fact, the past decade has been called the Christian genocide with over 100,000 Christians killed solely because of their religious faith. One of the most striking examples is the assassinated martyred archbishop, St. Oscar Romero of El Salvador.

Here in our St. Rita Parish, on our 91<sup>st</sup> anniversary, we remember and we honor all those parishioners who over the years have given of their time, talent, and treasure to build up and sustain our parish. They make us a true community, a welcoming community, in the spirit of equality, understanding, kindness, solidarity, openness, and tranquility. They do this in a real spirit of peace and love, all with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of our St. Rita family.

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