

Pentecost Sunday, 28 May 2023

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corin.12:3-7,12-13; John 20:19-23

Homily: Fr. Ken

On the day of Pentecost, the disciples were afraid of what might happen to them. They huddled together in an upstairs room with locked doors, waiting for something to happen. Jesus had promised them that the Holy Spirit would come. So, they waited.

Suddenly, the room started to shake and they heard a strong wind, and then the vision of fire appearing on each one of them. Everyone of them, and the whole group together were gifted with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

It did not take long for the effects of that Spirit to be seen and heard.

The people in the neighborhood gathered around; and visitors from all different locations who were in Jerusalem for the Holy Days, also gathered around the place where the disciples were.

The very fact that they all immediately understood what was being said to them by the Jesus' disciples was a clear indication of the Spirit's power to unite disparate peoples.

This is the great gift of the Holy Spirit, to bring understanding between peoples who before now, could not communicate with one another very easily at all.

Reading again the story of that moment in the upper room when Jesus appeared to his friends teaches us that the Spirit of God brings three great gifts to us, if we will receive them. The first is the gift of peace. Shalom is a word and a grace that Jesus imparts to the disciples, now that all the violence has done its worst. Then the Lord gives his friends their mission to the world.

As he was sent, so now they are sent. Finally, the Spirit will empower them to bring reconciliation into a torn and troubled world.

Pentecost is known as the "birthday" of the Church. We, the Church, came into being as such that day. The Spirit came and enlivened a group that had almost died.

The risen Jesus sent his living Spirit to be our life. Each one of us, as well as the whole Church together, receives the gift, and the gift is to be used. We begin with the gift of peace. Not the world's peace, initially, but our own. We seek to grow in the gift of a peaceful mind and heart, and peaceful relationships in our life. That is our first prayer. Come, Holy Spirit, into my heart and mind and life.

The second gift is the mission. We are sent out from the Church into the world around us. We are able, with the Spirit's help, to be outgoing and to help bring the gift of peace into the lives of those we live with and work with. We have a responsibility now. It is a grace given to us. We can truly inspire others.

Finally, the third gift is the grace to reconcile people who are at war with one another. There is the power to forgive others and the power to call people to justice. Do we believe this? Do we accept this? Come, Holy Spirit!