

Pentecost - C  
Acts 2:1-11;  
I Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13;  
John 14:15-16, 23b-26  
Little Flower - 6-8-25

My Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. Today we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and upon the Church.

As we heard in last Sunday's Gospel, before his Ascension, Jesus told them, "*And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*"

On Pentecost, Jesus fulfilled the promise he made before the Ascension. Today's reading from the Acts of the Apostles describes the coming of the Holy Spirit: "*And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving 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.*" As we all know, wind and fire carry with them tremendous power. Immediately the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, and immediately they went forth to proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

Acts tells us that the apostles began to speak in different tongues, and everyone heard them in his or her own language. To grasp the full significance of this, we have to recall the story of the Tower of Babel from the book of Genesis [Genesis 11:1-9]. In the beginning, everyone spoke the same language. Filled with pride, they decided they could build a tower up into the sky. Because of their pride, God scrambled their language, they could no longer understand each other, and they scattered throughout the world.

In his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote that Jesus became a life-giving spirit [I Cor. 15:45]. Throughout his writings, Paul made it clear that Jesus undid what Adam had done. If God scrambled the language of humankind because of human pride, the coming of the Holy Spirit enabled everyone to understand the apostles in his or her own language.

In other words, the scrambling of language created walls and barriers and divisions among people. The coming of the Spirit tore down those walls and barriers and divisions. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, is the Spirit love, the Spirit of unity.

In our marriages, our families, and our relationships, are there not times when we feel that everyone is speaking a different language? Most of these times are when people believe that their way is the only way or the only right way and are unwilling to listen to and understand the ideas, perspectives, needs, wants, desires of others and are unwilling to compromise. These are the times when we are not allowing ourselves to be led by the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit of Love, the Spirit of unity [Romans 8:14]. The same is true for the divisions within the world and the Church.

My brothers and sisters, in his First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons....*" For his own time, Paul's idea was radical: the Jews were the saved; the Greeks were the unsaved; free persons were people with rights; and slaves were non-persons without rights. Paul argued that these distinctions no longer mattered because all were baptized in one Spirit into one body. One of our biggest challenges as believers is believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of love, rather than in human power, to create unity within our families, our communities, our world, and our Church.