

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

Solemnity of Pentecost

May 31, 2020

“Hearing is Believing”

Greek Orthodox Christians celebrate Pentecost with a weeklong build up and an all night Vigil with special poetic prayers and the proclamation of most if not all of the Acts of the Apostles. The Pentecost Liturgy at Our Lady of Lourdes is a beloved event. The congregation is clad in red, the ceiling is draped in silky crimson bands of fabric, and all the pennants, banners, altar cloths and vestments are ablaze with the flame of faith. The Liturgy of the Word boasts an ensemble of lectors shouting “Jesus is Lord” in a host of languages. The Music Ministry outdoes itself. The Amazing Grace Liturgical Dancers amaze. Joy is served. Service of others is sparked anew.

“And suddenly, there came from the sky,
a noise like a strong driving wind....” – Acts 2:2

The Spirit is no stranger in Luke’s two books of the Bible – his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In fact, the Spirit can be detected throughout both testaments from the very first chapter with “a mighty wind sweeping over the waters” (Genesis 1:2). “Mighty wind” is the English translation of what in Hebrew is “the spirit or breath [ruah] of God.” Whenever you hear the sound of a great gush of wind in Scripture, it signals a new action of God in the history of salvation.

In Acts, Luke assures readers and hearers that the same Spirit that animated Jesus will propel the lives and deeds – the very Acts – of the followers. In Luke’s Gospel, it was the Spirit that came down on Jesus at his Baptism by John (3:22); then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert for forty days where he was tempted by the devil (4:1-2); and it was “the Spirit of the Lord that was upon” Jesus when he made his first public sermon (4:14-29). Likewise in Acts, it is the Spirit doing the leading, prodding, inspiring and propelling of the first Generation of disciples.

- “Then Peter, filled with the holy Spirit, answered them” (4:8)
- “Stephen, a man filled with faith and the holy Spirit” (6:5)
- “The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go...’” (8:29)
- “...the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away...” (8:39)
- “...the holy Spirit said ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul’” (13:2)
- for Timothy and Paul, the Spirit “prevented them” from preaching in some places and but sent them elsewhere where they converted whole households, such as Lydia’s (16:14-15)

And this is just a few of the myriad of examples of how the Spirit’s inspiration gives the needed spark for much of the early Church’s acts. But this powerful presence of God did not end with the First Generation.

A little noticed detail in accounts of the Pentecost experience is that the Spirit descends on community groups, not individuals. Even in Paul’s road-to-Damascus experience, it wasn’t until he met with Ananias that the scales fell from his eyes and he was baptized. When Luke tells the story of Pentecost, he starts with the detail that everybody had come together. When John depicts Jesus bequeathing his Spirit to the disciples it is again in a communal setting.

The Pentecost event has repeated itself in new ways over the centuries. One sign that this transformation, this sea change has occurred is that understanding flows forth. The “confusion” that was sown in the tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) becomes a new confusion at Pentecost:

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in [their] own language. They were astounded, and in amazement....” (2:4-7)

The meaning of the phrase “to speak in different tongues” has been much debated. As with many things in Scripture, it has several

seemingly contradictory meanings. Some say that the Greek word Luke uses – “glossolalia” – is actually another Greek word “Xenoglossia” or someone speaking one of the 6,500 existing language that they did not know. If you could speak Mandarin or Igbo or Russian or Portuguese without learning it, you were speaking in tongues. The other possible meaning for “glossolalia” is language of the angels or “heavenly language.” We can’t solve this debate here, but we can focus on what was even more miraculous than the speaking. It was the hearing and the understanding.

They heard them speaking their own language – without U.N.-style simultaneous translation headphones. Something happened and they understood each other. My Lord. And such events have repeated down through the ages.

In April 9, 1906 – six years before the founding of our parish – something happened on a street corner in Los Angeles. William Seymour, a storefront minister and son of freed slaves, was praying with seven other men on Bonnie Brae Street in Los Angeles when suddenly “as though hit by a bolt of lightning” all eight of them were knocked out of their seats and they began to speak in tongues and shout praises to God. Word spread in the working class neighborhood. Crowds grew. Soon they moved to another location on Azusa Street – and a three-year mission flowered and became known the world over.

People from a diversity of backgrounds and ethnicities gathered. They were African American, Anglo, Asian, Native American, Latinx, and a variety of immigrants, including Yiddish speakers, and many of them reported being understood when speaking their own language. This Azusa Street Revival became the seed for the rise of several kinds of Pentecostal churches in the last century. As might be expected in the Jim Crow era, there were controversies with this mingling of peoples in prayer. But those storms were weathered.

The storms of Jim Crow threatened the very founding of Our Lady of Lourdes when a plot of land in the Highland area (between Hilliard and Fort Streets) was denied Mother Katharine and Father Lissner in a hail of public outrage termed “the Highland Indignation.”

Our founders turned indignation into ingenuity, getting a prominent lawyer to make a straw purchase of another site at 101 North Boulevard (later re-designated 29 Boulevard N.E.) in the historic “Sweet Auburn” which has been our home ever since.

Trouble didn’t end with that purchase. In the first decade, Lourdes withstood rising racial tensions, the 1917 Great Fire which devastated the old Fourth Ward, and 1918-20 Influenza Pandemic and a subsequent tuberculosis outbreak, which afflicted the Lourdes faculty. Furthermore, as our church history reports: “The participation of the Euro-American S.B.S.[Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament] teachers at Lourdes was threatened by a 1915 bill before the Georgia state legislature which would have outlawed the instruction of Negro children by white teachers.” The Bishop and lay Catholic leaders worked to get that legislation withdrawn.

And Lourdes rose. Over the years, the Spirit brought new members. Liturgies blossomed. A nationally renowned liturgical dance ministry thrived. Social outreach ministries flowered. Hospitality became a byword and then a reputation of Lourdes. Now a new challenge confronts us in our pandemic peril: separation. But we are Lourdes. The Spirit dwells among us today. We are inspired. We are not afraid. Come, Holy Spirit.

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

Pentecost – May 31, 2020

Leader: In the name of the Father, † and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: *Amen*

Lord Jesus, You were present to your gathered followers:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You sent the Holy Spirit to be with them and us:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You gave us all the power to forgive and love others:

Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, through the mystery of this holy feast
you sanctify your Church in every nation and people.
Pour out the gifts of your Spirit across the face of the earth.
Send down, O God, upon your people the flame of your Holy Spirit.
May your life-giving Spirit lend fire to our words
and strength to our witness. Send us forth to the nations of the world
to proclaim with boldness your wondrous work.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Reading 1

Acts 2:1 – 11

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,
they were all in one place together.
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.
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit
and began to speak in different tongues,
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.
Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven
staying in Jerusalem.
At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were
confused because each one heard them speaking in his own
language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked,
“Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?
Then how does each of us hear them in his native language?
We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites,
inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,
Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,
Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene,
as well as travelers from Rome,
both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs,
yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues
of the mighty acts of God.”

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (*Psalm 104*)

R. (Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth).

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!

How manifold are your works, O Lord!

the earth is full of your creatures;

R. (Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth).

May the glory of the LORD endure forever;

may the LORD be glad in his works!

Pleasing to him be my theme;

I will be glad in the LORD.

R. (Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth).

If you take away their breath, they perish

and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created,

and you renew the face of the earth.

R. (Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth).

Reading 2

1st Corinthians 12:3b - 7, 12 - 13

Brothers and sisters:

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit;

there are different forms of service but the same Lord;

there are different workings but the same God

who produces all of them in everyone.

To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit

is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts,

and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,

so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,

whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons,

and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Sequence

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Come, Holy Spirit, come!

And from your celestial home

Shed a ray of light divine!

Come, Father of the poor!

Come, source of all our store!

Come, within our bosoms shine.

You, of comforters the best;

You, the soul's most welcome guest;

Sweet refreshment here below;

In our labor, rest most sweet;

Grateful coolness in the heat;

Solace in the midst of woe.

O most blessed Light divine,

Shine within these hearts of yours,

And our inmost being fill!

Where you are not, we have naught,

Nothing good in deed or thought,

Nothing free from taint of ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;

On our dryness pour your dew;

Wash the stains of guilt away:

Bend the stubborn heart and will;

Melt the frozen, warm the chill;

Guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful, who adore

And confess you, evermore

In your sevenfold gift descend;

Give them virtue's sure reward;

Give them your salvation, Lord;

Give them joys that never end. Amen.

Alleluia.

Alleluia

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:19 – 23

On the evening of that first day of the week,
when the doors were locked, where the disciples were,
for fear of the Jews,
Jesus came and stood in their midst
and said to them, “Peace be with you.”
When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.
The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you.
As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”
And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,
“Receive the Holy Spirit.
Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,
and whose sins you retain are retained.”

Reflection Prompts:

“One of the reasons we’re sometimes deeply restless and frustrated is that our life is often out of sync with its proper spirit. We haven’t let Pentecost happen.” This is the diagnosis of Fr. Ron Rolheiser, O.M.I., president of Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. He reminds us that Pentecost is part of cycle of life that has “five moments.”

1. On Good Friday, life is lost;
2. On Easter, new life is received;
3. During the 40 Days afterwards, the disciples adjust to a new kind of presence of Jesus;
4. At the Ascension, the disciples let go of the Jesus they once had;

5. At Pentecost, they receive a new spirit of life they're now living.

“And that’s the cycle too within our own lives, Fr. Rolheiser writes in this month’s “Give Us This Day.” “We need, constantly, to *accept our deaths, receive the new life that’s then given us, grieve our losses, let go of the old*, and then *receive the spirit for the actual life we’re living*.” He urges us to embrace the lifelong mystery that is Pentecost. “We suffer many losses – loss of youth, loss of health, loss of loved ones, loss of wholeness, and the loss of countless things that are precious to us. Yet, we’re never dead! We’re always given new life. But if we are trying to live that new life with our former spirit, we will find ourselves deeply out of sorts. We need Pentecost – daily – in our lives. It harmonizes our life with its proper spirit.”

Here’s a link to Kirk Franklin & the Family’s version of “Where the Spirit Is.” After listening, move into a discussion/mediation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMWICrct5ek>

1. How does your experience match Fr. Rolheiser’s point about living our new life with our former spirit?
2. What do you regard as your spiritual gifts? How do you use them?
3. Name some ways you see Christ working in our world today.
4. Reflect on how the Spirit enables us to hear one another across boundaries of difference, as in the Acts of the Apostles, in ways that deepen our understanding and solidarity. What has been a recent experience of this gift?

Then, after a moment of contemplative ease, move into the intercessions followed by singing or reciting the Lord’s Prayer.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – May 31, 2020 PENTECOST

Leader: Let us pray for the Spirit to renew the face of the Earth.

Reader

1. In gratitude for the many gifts bestowed on this community, and for the courage to offer our many gifts for the Common Good. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.** (RESPOND: **Come, Holy Spirit.**)
2. For all those who feel abandoned by God – refugees, the poor, the forgotten, the lonely and the disenfranchised – that they may come to know that God hears their distress and holds them close. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
3. For new ways to emerge for us to be connected and supportive with each other while we wait to be back together safely. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
4. For those who touch us today in ways known only to us, who bring love and peace, clarity and forgiveness, sustenance and hope. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
5. For those who have been clear signs of God’s peace, presence and forgiveness, for leaders, teachers, healers, pastors and ordinary faithful disciples. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
6. For the insight and vision to project positive futures for our worshipping community in our present and for creative ways to be of service right now. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
7. For the prayer intentions of Lynn M. Johnson, which are included in today’s Mass. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
8. For the nearly 41 million who are now unemployed as well as those all those who are underemployed or underpaid, that they find the work they seek and be paid a living wage with health care benefits. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
9. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, those afflicted by the

corona-virus, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially The Honorable Ruby Butler DeMesme and for Raul Solorzano, for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

Presider: Gracious God, open us to the Spirit's power. May we recognize and employ the gifts you have given each of us to help renew our Church and the face of the Earth. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who sends us.....LET THE CHURCH SAY– AMEN!

Lord's Prayer (recited or sung)

Closing Prayer

O God, you bestow on your Church gifts from heaven.^{[L] [SEP]}
Preserve the grace you have given us,^{[L] [SEP]}
that the breath of Pentecost may quicken our hearts^{[L] [SEP]}
and that this meal, made holy by your Spirit,^{[L] [SEP]}
may advance the great work of redemption.^{[L] [SEP]}
Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.
LET THE CHURCH SAY– AMEN!

Closing Hymn

I Want to be a Follower of Christ
by J.W. Harris

I want to be a follower of Christ,
I want to be one of his disciples.
I want to live in the newness of life,
Just let me be a follower of Christ.
What do I have to do?
What do I have to say?
How do I have to walk each and ev'ry day?

Tell me what does it cost if I carry the cross?
Just let me be a follower of Christ.