

# Pentecost – May 30/31, 2020 – Reflection

Just about every parent of a high school or college athlete; just about every fan of any professional sports team knows the feeling of looking on fearfully, helplessly when their son or daughter, when their star or favorite player crumples to the ground after a hard hit, an awkward fall, a violent collision and does not move, does not bounce right back up. We've all heard television and radio announcers send up the prayerful wish that speaks for all of us: "I hope he's just had the wind knocked out of him!" "Just the wind knocked out ..." - I guess when you think of all the catastrophic possibilities, having "the wind knocked out of you" sounds pretty mild in comparison, much the lesser of any number of horrible evils. But if the wind is knocked out of you, doesn't that mean that the air is knocked out of you? And, if the air is knocked out of you, doesn't that mean you're not breathing? And, if you're not breathing, well, I'm not so sure that's good for your long-term prospects!

Today is Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit of God came upon the Apostles and Disciples, as a wind that gave birth and breath to the Church. The wind was not seen, but its great power was felt as fearful men and women left the security of their hiding place and boldly went out into the light, out into the world on foot, on the backs of beasts of burden, in wagons and chariots, in boats and ships all to tell the story of Jesus Christ. These fishermen and tentmakers, these cloth dealers and tax collectors, these wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, these ordinary people with no training, no guarantees, ordinary people

with nothing to gain and everything to lose, were moved by the wind of the breath of God to speak what Jesus spoke, to heal as Jesus healed, to give as Jesus gave, to witness as Jesus witnessed, to lay down their lives even as Jesus did all because they had opened themselves to the breath of God, the Holy Spirit of God and were now on fire with love for God and for their fellow human beings.

We, no less than those ancient first Christians, have been offered the breath of life. As it was with Adam, when we were conceived, God "breathed into our nostrils the breath of life; and (you) became a living being." In Baptism, we are raised from the waters of the womb of the Church, reborn as children of God, sisters and brothers of Jesus, filled with the life breath of the Holy Spirit. In the sacraments, we receive the breath and gifts of the Holy Spirit: "Unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you," ... Communion. "Receive the Holy Spirit, whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," ... Penance. "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young people shall see visions, and your elders shall dream dreams" ... Confirmation.

Well, if the Spirit is in me, if the breath of God is in me, if the Gifts of the Spirit are mine to claim, then why don't I feel it?

Maybe you've just had the wind knocked out of you! Maybe you've stayed away from the sacraments and you're oxygen depleted without even knowing it! Maybe you find little time to pray or read God's Word and so you've been missing the whisper of God to inspire you! Maybe if your breathing in the Spirit is shallow, your heart can't beat with love for the other shown in works of charity. When you have the wind

knocked out of you by laziness or the injury caused by sin, your faith is not bold, it's barely on life support.

If you've had the wind knocked out of you, if you're lying on the ground not moving a spiritual muscle, I dare you: breathe in the breath of the living God. Spend even a fraction of the time you spend on social media in prayer, with the Word in the scriptures. If enough faith oxygen isn't getting to your heart, maybe you're anemic, maybe you need the Body and Blood of Christ more than you thought you did to build you up so that you will have the energy to care more about another than you do about yourself!

I dare you - open yourself to the breath of God. Prove your readiness, your willingness, by the time of your prayer, by the hunger of your search of the Word, by the kindness and generosity of your charity.

I hope that you've only had the wind knocked out of you and that you'll get up off the mat and get back in the game and be ... really be ... the Christian the Holy Spirit made you to be.