

Msgr. Dennis Sheehan
Homily Given on May 31, 2009
Pentecost Sunday
Liturgical Year B

Today's first reading is from the early part of the Acts of the Apostles. Here's the opening line again: "When the day of Pentecost had come they were all together in one place." That's us. We're not all the same. We come from different races, different languages, different views of life. To those gathered that day, the Holy Spirit came. That first Pentecost, the house shook, the wind blew, and the fire blazed. Then all began to speak. All of them. Not just Peter. Not just the Twelve Apostles. "All of them," we're told, spoke about God's power.

Maybe you're one of those who thinks proclaiming God's power is my job. Think again. The Pentecost Spirit comes on everyone. It doesn't matter if you're old or young. It doesn't matter that you're male or female. It doesn't matter that you're not ordained. The Pentecost Spirit comes to everyone.

I'm struck that Luke doesn't say: The Spirit came to the best and brightest. Today's reading says nothing about personalities or talents. It simply says the Holy Spirit came on everyone.

In my experience, Christian living is the loudest word we speak. You remember the classic story of the great Saint Francis of Assisi. One day he said to his young follower, "Let's go preaching." Fascinated, the young friar followed Francis for hours through the town. He smiled and greeted others; he prayed with some. At the end of the day, the young friar said to Saint Francis, "I thought we'd be preaching." "Oh yes," the Saint said, "We're always preaching. Sometimes we use words."

We all proclaim God's word. Young people are silenced when others tell them they're too young. They're not. Old people are silenced when others tell them the day is past. It's not. God's Spirit comes to everyone. Everyone is called to speak.

You and I – all of us together – are part of Pentecost. The spirit was noisy and dramatic that first day. You and I may be noisy or quiet. But whenever we live – and speak – for Jesus Christ and his gospel, the Pentecost miracle goes on. All of them – all of us – are filled with God's Spirit to proclaim God's mighty works.