

## **Pentecost Day - 2020**

Acts 2:1-11, 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13, Jn 14:15-16, 23b-26

One of my sisters and her husband took me out to dinner for my birthday a few years back. We went to the Longhorn Steak house, and me as the food connoisseur that I am ordered a hamburger. It has become a family joke about how I like my hamburger - I say things to the server like: "I want it well done, a hockey puck, I mean burn it, when the cook thinks its done let him leave it on another couple minutes, a little ash on the outside is o.k." Well that day my sister laughed as I ordered and then told about a person who she knows who has a different way he likes his meat done, he says "I want it so that if you preform CPR on it in might just pull through." To each his own.

In the book of the prophet Ezekiel we find a strange story. Ezekiel is walking around in a field covered with dead bodies after a military battle. It's really clear that there is no way that these bodies could pull through, even with the best medicine we have today. They are in worse shape than the dry burned hamburger I like. There is nothing left of the bodies but bones, and not only that - they are so dried out there isn't even the slightest chance that there could be life in them. God asks Ezekiel if he thinks they could come back to life - Ezekiel answers *Lord God, you alone know that*. Which translates into our modern language as: "are you kidding me?!" Then the Lord has Ezekiel prophesy over the bones, and bodies are formed on them again, but they are still dead - they have no life in them until the Spirit enters them. To accomplish this, Ezekiel is told to speak to the Spirit: *From the four winds come, O Spirit, and breathe into these slain that they may come to life*. And they do. God goes on to explain to Ezekiel that if God can bring the bones back to full life, he can do the same for others who are not quite so bad off.

In the first reading we see the disciples gathered in a room - they are there in body, but the spirit is not in them - they are not yet spiritually alive. We can be like that sometimes. Many of the anxieties we experience in life are the result of not being able to satisfy the inner emptiness and dryness that only God can satisfy. So how does the Spirit of God enter in and give life, how does the dryness of our spiritual emptiness become moistened and healed? Jesus says in the Gospel: *Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him*. It is in believing in Jesus and keeping to his word that we open ourselves to the Spirit's presence, flowing like a spring of water inside us.

Today we celebrate the event of the first outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost. The disciples gathered together had the Spirit poured upon them and it now rested inside them. We see in the scriptures the great transformation that they underwent as this Spirit flowed with life inside them. They began to preach with courageous fortitude, they gave right counsel in their group and to whomever they spoke, they gained wisdom, knowledge, and understanding; they worshiped God with true piety, and felt deeply within them the respect for God that is called the fear of the Lord. The gifts of the disciples were a sign of the spiritual life flowing within them. St Paul told us in the second reading: *There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord ... to each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.* In baptism and confirmation we were given gifts, we will see benefits as the Spirit flows in us. But it does not always flow in the same way.

Remember Jesus' words in the Gospel: *If you love me you will keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always.* That advocate Spirit is there, but it takes our faith and love of God to help to release the flow of the Spirit. I will bet that not every person present at Pentecost experienced the same thing. Some needed time to find the belief that uncapped the spring of the Spirit, some might never have experienced it. Through his life, St. Paul was one person among many who shows us what can happen when we have faith and allow the Spirit to flow. If we don't know what to do to make this happen, Paul gives hope of that when he says: *the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness ... the Spirit ... intercedes [for us].*

In this Mass today join your mind to the prayers that are said, and after you receive the Lord in the Eucharist ask for the Spirit within you to pray for you - to intercede for you that you be given whatever you need to allow that spring of the Spirit to flow within you. You just may sense within yourself a mini-Pentecost as that spring begins to trickle. Keep it up, so that it trickles more and more. As time goes on you will begin to seek out those things that will help to fully uncup that endless stream of the Spirit that was placed with you at your Confirmation - a stream of power that can bring dead bones back to life, and could even moisten a heart as dry as a hamburger cooked like I like it.