

Pastor's Corner

Come, Holy Spirit!

This weekend we celebrate Pentecost, the official end of the Easter Season. Pentecost was a harvest festival in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Pentecost marks the coming of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension into heaven.

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, is present in every sacrament and is responsible for changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus at every Mass. The Holy Spirit is the active, energizing presence of God in our world.

One of my most memorable experiences of the Holy Spirit occurred when I was a first-year seminarian assigned to work in a parish. The Pastor was bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish. He had a Spanish radio and TV ministry. One day, he invited me to the filming of a TV show in Spanish on the Holy Spirit. Since I had only an elementary understanding of Spanish, I didn't catch much of what was said as the Pastor interviewed guests regarding the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

After the filming was complete and the guests had gone home, the show's producer informed the Pastor that he was one minute short on footage for the show. He suggested the Pastor call someone back to be interviewed to fill up the time. But the Pastor looked at me and said, "Joe can do that." I protested, "But I don't speak Spanish." He replied, "Just tell me in English what you want to say about the Holy Spirit and I will tell you how to say it in Spanish." I was terrified at that thought and objected greatly, but he insisted. I didn't want to flunk my parish ministry assignment so I reluctantly agreed.

I prayed big-time to the Holy Spirit for help with the task, saying over and over again, "Come, Holy Spirit!" My prayer was answered. Minutes later, I looked into the camera, and with the best Spanish accent I could muster, said, "El Espiritu Santo is la gasolina de mi vida . . ." [The Holy Spirit is the fuel of my life . . .] The Pastor was pleased.

A few weeks later, the program aired and several Spanish-speaking people who saw it said to me, "Well, if it isn't Señor seminarista fraudulento José [Joe, the fraudulent seminarian]!" I was endlessly teased about my appearance on the show, but people said my words and accent were tops. Believe me, that was the grace and work of the Holy Spirit, not Fraudulent Seminarian Joe!

I learned that day the power of the Holy Spirit, a lesson which has never left me. I pray to the Holy Spirit many times each day, especially when I feel overwhelmed by the demands of life. Thanks be to God for the great gift of the Holy Spirit. I strongly commend everyone to pray daily: Come Holy Spirit, or, Ven Espiritu Santo! You will never go wrong if you seek the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Have a blessed Pentecost,
Fr. Joe