

The Solemnity of Pentecost  
May 11, 2008

(Deacon Pat Hall)

Homilies are aids to encountering the living Word.

First, please read the scripture passages that inform this homily.

[Acts 2:1-11](#), [1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13](#) & [John 20:19-23](#)

These readings can be found at: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/readings/051108.shtml>

Happy Birthday!

Pentecost is the solemnity when we celebrate the birth of our Church.

Today is the perfect climax to these past few weeks of liturgy when we have been listening to Jesus console us that he would never leave us abandoned.

He said he would send the Holy Spirit so that Jesus could be more intimately present with us.

Fittingly so, our readings today have dramatic images of strong driving winds, tongues as of fire, speaking in tongues, astonishment, amazement, appearing behind locked doors, fear, crucifixion wounds, peace, joy and forgiveness.

And Paul brings together all of this, all of our diverse talents, backgrounds and perspectives and proclaims that it is all the work of one...one body of Christ through baptism in the one Spirit.

St. Irenæus writes:

*“Baptism gives us the grace of new birth in God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit.*

*For those who bear God's Spirit are led to the Word, that is, to the Son, and the Son presents them to the Father, and the Father confers incorruptibility on them. And it is impossible to see God's Son without the Spirit, and no one can approach the Father without the Son, for the knowledge of the Father is the Son, and the knowledge of God's Son is obtained through the Holy Spirit.”*

(St. Irenæus, *Dem. ap. 7*: SCh 62, 41-42.)

There is a certain excitement to being a part of ...one.

I remember Jan and I were at a Red Wings hockey game a number of years ago, 1997 in fact.

They were about to clinch the President's Trophy for the regular season championship with an all-time NHL record of wins.

The pitch of the crowd grew so loud, that it maxed out what even the ear could absorb.

I couldn't even hear my own yelling. I couldn't hear my wife cheering (and it had nothing to do with selective hearing).

As the game clock ticked off its last seconds, the increasing pitch was no longer just heard, it could be felt as palpable sound waves going through one's body. All were one in a single grand expression of celebration. That was about as good as a secular experience can get.

But, that experience pales when compared to the stories we heard proclaimed from scripture today.

And that is the same experience to which the timeless Spirit is calling you ....today and tomorrow.

Simultaneous to this growing climax of our Easter season liturgies we have also been experiencing the increased anticipation of returning to our newly reconstructed church back home on Monroe Street.

More and more people have been driving by just to see it as it is almost finished up...it's just – not – quite - done.

We are starting to revisit the memories of three years ago when we were all part of that parish retreat of our Growing in the Spirit capital campaign.

The only thing that was asked of us was to engage in deep prayer, individually and communally to discern how God wanted us to respond.

The prayer that I am about to share with you initiated all of our committee gatherings:

Lord, bless these efforts which are a special ministry of our parish.

Through these efforts we want to strengthen and build our campus ministry – to create new bonds of friendship and commitment, love and community.

May our efforts bring us closer to you.

May our efforts to construct and renovate our parish facilities also bring others to you. Give each of us the courage to proclaim the Good News with boldness and conviction. May our worship and our activities bring you praise and glory.

I am willing to extend myself as I listen to others and invite them to dream and grow with us.

Help me to overcome my hesitancy and fear, for you are my strength.

May it be your voice they hear, calling them to a deeper discipleship.

I offer you this day, and all that I am, all that I do, and all that you want to accomplish through me today. May it bring you glory now and forever. Amen.

Can we connect that prayer...that retreat experience to that locked room when Jesus breathed on the disciples and 50 days later when tongues as of fire came to rest on each one of them as they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Can we connect that to what we anticipate as we move back to Monroe Street?

It is a beautiful facility: the flooring, the ceilings, the beams and the glass make for a dramatic environment.

But then we didn't build the structure for that.

You see we Catholics here, we Christians here, we searchers here are all one family.

We are a Spirit-filled Pentecost people.

Our new facilities only provide the environment for us to express ourselves as a Pentecost people to grow in deeper relationship with our God and with each other.

Our new Blessed Sacrament Chapel provides a noble place to reserve the consecrated hosts for distribution to the home-bound... and to provide a place for private prayer in adoration of Jesus' real presence.

Our Daily Chapel, as built, is part of our greater worship space, separated only by a glass wall, reminding our Sabbath worshippers that there are those who are praying for us daily and reminding our daily worshippers that they are part of a Sabbath people.

Our Reconciliation Chapel assures us that we can be brave in going out and risking getting battered when we know there is a place where we can go to receive healing.

This would be a wonderful place to stay, but then Jesus did not stay on top of the mountain during the transfiguration like Peter wanted.

Disciples are a sent people.

Our new church encourages mission.

We have a grand new kitchen.

How will you translate that to Jesus' charge to take care of the hungry?

Our social hall can hold over a hundred; our meeting rooms stand ready.

When I was on the SWAT Team, we always gathered to train and brief before we went out on hostage rescues.

How can our meeting spaces be used to empower us to take God out there and rescue hostages from the loneliness and the hurt of the world?

Jesus is breathing on you today.

Can you feel the driving wind of the Spirit?

Will you allow yourselves to be set on fire, to be Church for one another?