

Pentecost Sunday- C & EF

Ordinary Form

ACTS 2:1-11; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:3B-7, 12-13; JOHN 20:19-23

Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/051913-pentecost-mass-during-day.cfm>

Extraordinary Form

Acts 2:1-11; John 14: 23-31

Come, Holy Spirit (Veni Sancte Spiritu)

Today we are celebrating Pentecost. With this Sunday we are putting a period at the end of our Lenten season of preparation and our Easter season of celebration. With Pentecost, we are starting a new season, a season to make Jesus present to the world through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is the answer to the question, the question posed by the Ascension, which we celebrated last week.

As they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. (Acts 1:9)

Can you see that in your mind's eye?

I can remember, in a time before I could even read, that very picture in my Golden Book of the Bible.

I remember the sky and clouds, rays of sunshine, Jesus with his outstretched arms three stories above the ground.

He was a smiling Jesus, not the tortured one from Good Friday.

His robe was gleaming white.

The disciples were standing on a hill, looking up and gawking.

As a child, I thought that picture was the end of the story: Jesus wins!!

Now, if I imagine myself back then in the disciples' shoes, I think my reaction would be:

"Hey, Jesus, where are you going?"

Think about it.

Jesus had led an incredible life.

He preached repentance.

He was a champion for the poor and powerless.

He healed the sick and crippled.

He challenged the consciences of those who oppressed others.

He even raised Lazarus from the dead.

At this, the authorities trembled with fear.

There was only one thing to do: crucify Jesus!

Of course, this didn't even go their way.
And so we have Easter, the Resurrection.

If I was one of the disciples on that first Easter, I think I'd be on top of the world.

"Man, we're going to show them now."

What do you think a *resurrected* Jesus would be able to do?

Talk about preaching.

Talk about healing.

Talk about "*casting down the mighty*" and "*lifting up the lowly*". (Lk 1:52)

But then later on at the Mount of Olives, the big question:

"Hey Jesus, where are you going?" WHY?

There's so much left for you to do.

There's preaching to be done.

There's people to be healed.

There's justice to be defended.

Where are you going? WHY?

But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go.

For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you.

But if I go, I will send him to you. (Jn 16:7)

The meaning of the Ascension then, is to be found in Pentecost.

And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were.

Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. (Acts 2:2-4)

We speak of this event as the birthday of our Church. I guess my Golden Book picture of Jesus in the clouds isn't the end of the story after all.

The Acts of the Apostles goes on to tell our story, the story of us disciples, Spirit-filled and Spirit-led.

Acts tells of Peter leading an incredible life.

He preached repentance.

He was a champion for the poor and powerless.

He healed the sick and crippled.

He challenged the consciences of those who oppressed others.

He even raised Tabitha from the dead.

The authorities trembled with fear.

There was only one thing to do: crucify Peter!
Peter was able to lay down his life because, in faith, he knew Jesus' resurrection awaited him as well.

So why? Why did this one man, Jesus, ascend?
It was so that the Spirit, from the Father and through the Son, could fill the hearts of his disciples.
It was so that in baptism, immersion in the Spirit, his disciples could become Christs.

Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. (Jn 14:12)

Today, there are 2 billion Christians on this earth.
There are two billion of us so that if we allow Christ to remain in us and we in him, we can be Jesus' saving presence.

We can lead incredible lives.
We can preach repentance.
We can be champions for the poor and powerless.
We can heal the sick and crippled.
We can challenge the consciences of those who oppress others.
We can bring life where there is death.
We can selflessly commit our lives to each other,
even to the point of laying them down in the hope of resurrection.

Jesus ascended precisely so that he could be with us always.

When we gather here and share the sign of peace,
can we look for God in each other's eyes?
Can we hear his voice through the revealed Word
and allow him into our hearts?

As we approach his altar, can we anticipate Jesus greeting us with his peace
o.f. [and breathing on us to receive the Holy Spirit?]
e.f. (not as the world offers peace, but the peace that only Jesus can give?)

Can we go forth from here as a people
and be as Jesus for each other and the world?

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses... (Acts 1: 11)

With 2 billion of us, imagine the magnitude of Christ's healing and justice and love.

Come, Holy Spirit (Veni Sancte Spiritu)s