

The Vigil of Pentecost- A 2014

(Deacon Pat Hall)

Homilies are aids to encounter the living Word.

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

**EZEKIEL 37:1-14, ROMANS 8:22-27; & JOHN 7:37-39**

These readings can be found at:

<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/060814-vigil-mass.cfm>

Well, that Gospel reading today was pretty short.

Didn't it leave you expecting more?

Maybe that was part of the reason for its brevity.

You see tonight we are celebrating the Vigil of the Solemnity of Pentecost.

Now we, at our 4:15 gathering, are accustomed to hearing proclaimed the Sunday readings.

Often times I hear Saturday Mass referred to as the Vigil for the Sunday Mass.

In truth, though, our Church has designated only a hand full of vigils.

We are familiar with the Vigil on Christmas Eve and of course the Mother of all vigils for Easter.

Tonight is one such vigil, the Vigil of Pentecost.

Tomorrow, the Gospel reading is the familiar one of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance in the locked room where he breathed on his disciples and they received the Holy Spirit.

Tomorrow's reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells of their gathering when there was a *noise like a strong driving wind* and upon each came to rest *tongues as of fire, where they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Those are not our readings tonight.

Our Gospel is short.

It leaves us wanting more.

It leaves us hoping for the promised Spirit.

Paul's letter speaks of the groaning of labor pains, our painful yearning for redemption.

And from the prophet Ezekiel, we envision the graphic scene of dry dead bones rattling alive, becoming en-fleshed and receiving the Spirit giving hope to a people for salvation.

Tonight is one of expectancy.

It is not ho-hum.

I try to open my heart to that.

I remember those Christmas Eves when I was a little child, how my heart couldn't be contained I was so excited with anticipation about presents under a tree.

I only have to think of what is going on now across the parking lot at Fr. Bart Hall.

Young men and a few young women are being weighed-in... in preparation for their boxing matches this evening after 7:00 o'clock.

They've come here from all over the Midwest to participate.

They are nervous.

They are hopping and bouncing around, shaking their arms and legs, trying to stay loose in anticipation for their trials of courage tonight.

Their excitement is infectious; even their parents are hopped up.

If I could get so excited about Christmas presents,  
if they can get so excited about their athletic contest,  
how can we fail to become excited about the reception of the Spirit?

You... are asked to be the home and temple of the Spirit,  
to make Jesus present to the world.

You have heard this before, some of us who have been around the block for a few decades, hundreds of times.

That is one of the dangers inherent with being a long-time believer that sometimes the oft-heard message becomes ordinary.

But there is nothing ordinary in this.

This is the very reason God has recreated his divine image in you.

The creator of the Cosmos has created you,

a physically unsubstantial creature

on a middling planet

on the edge of galaxy

dwarfed by billions of galaxies.

And yet, having been made in God's image,

being made so as to love God and with God for all eternity,

you will outlive the stars...

if one would only allow the Spirit into their heart.

The Spirit comes to us in an intensely personal way,  
but not in an individual way.  
We receive the Spirit as a people.  
We share the Spirit as a people.

Our Gospel of John quoted, just after Jesus had just offered himself to all who  
thirst:

*Rivers of living water will flow from within him who believes in me.*

May we, a Spirit-filled, Spirit-directed people, disciples of the living Christ...  
may we be his rivers of living water  
to slake other's thirst,  
to rescue those who are in distress  
and to console those who have no hope.

Come to his altar.  
Receive the very presence of Christ.  
Become a temple for the Spirit.  
Become one ...  
and be Jesus' face to the world...  
all because God loved us first.