

## Pentecost

Today's readings give us one of those examples where the Evangelists differ in historical facts. John has Jesus breathing out the Holy Spirit upon the Disciples immediately upon appearing to them that first day.... While Luke has a similar appearance narrative, but reserves the Advocate's release until after the Ascension, on the 50<sup>th</sup> day... when the time for Pentecost was fulfilled.

Perhaps if we blend the two, we can get a sense of what might have REALLY happened.

So..... Imagine being in the Cenacle.....on the Zion hill.... In Jerusalem.

Andrew and James are nailing boards on the windows. Peter and Matthew sneak in with an abundance of supplies. Who knows how long we might be stuck here. Mary herself slides the bolt fast to secure the upper room door. We all hide, huddled together in fear. The Jews killed Jesus.... And WE might be next.

Just when we think we are secure... the wind howls, but not from outside, we are locked in tight... and suddenly.... There is Jesus.... In our midst. He shows us his hands where the nails had held him secure to the wooden beam and says, "Peace be with you." We rejoice that the Lord is alive, and he says a second time, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me... so I send you."

Then he breathes on us saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." As tongues like fire settle upon us. He said he wanted the world to be ablaze, and it appears that we are to be ... that fire.

He tells us that we can forgive sin.... Or not.

Then, we're not afraid anymore, in fact, we go out among the Jews proclaiming the Good News of Christ. And no matter where the people are from who hear us....They understand us...even if we might speak different languages. They understand as we proclaim the mighty acts of God.....

Well, maybe we can only "imagine" being present for Pentecost there in Jerusalem 2000 years ago..... but we can still live it out today.

We sometimes, perhaps often, especially this past year with CoVid, we want to lock ourselves away from the world where things are safe and comfortable, but no matter where we hide, Jesus finds us and draws us out, because, like the first disciples, we have work to do.

At Pentecost, with the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' work is done... but with the creation of the Church, it is given its **mission**. Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, so I send YOU" to announce the Good News ... Even to the Ends of her Earth.

We've been baptized. We've received the Holy Spirit as surely as those first disciples did. We are part of this mission.

Now, the early disciples miraculously preached in languages they couldn't have possibly known. I personally struggle even with English, and perhaps you are no linguist either, but we are still commissioned to Preach. How? Well, Jesus gives us one example... we can forgive. That's something we all can do. And everyone understands the universal language ... of Love.

No matter what tongue a person speaks, every human being can communicate Love. We may not know tagalog, but we know how to smile. We perhaps can not wax eloquently in Swahili, but we can show

compassion to some one who is suffering. We all know the language of love. And after all... is NOT that the Gospel message everyone really needs to hear?

Paul tells the Corinthians we have different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different forms of service... but the Same Lord. We must proclaim Jesus as Lord, by our acts of loving service, through the Holy Spirit.

So, whatever the actual historical facts might be, I think the message we are to take away with us today, is...

We can't hide in our rooms forever.

We must participate in the Mission of the Church commissioned on this day, which is to preach Christ as Lord,... through the universal language of love.

So..... Let's get busy.