

FROM FR. CHRIS ALIMAJI'S DESK

## Reflections on Pentecost Sunday 2021

Our Scripture Readings, Mass of the Day, Year B are: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23; and our Psalm of Praise is 104. The Vigil Mass Readings would also have some overtone in this reflection. And so, we pray as always with the invocation of the Holy Spirit: **“Come, Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of thy faithful. And enkindle in them the fire of thy love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face the earth.”** As we recall the first Christian Pentecost (cf. Acts 2: 1-11), we are also celebrating our corporate and individual experiences of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit is always present in the Church and in us as individual members of the Church. At our confirmation we are prayed over to be filled with the Holy Spirit and his gifts. We are **spiritually equipped to become witnesses for Christ**, from our Baptism, Confirmation, in Church worships and in faith formation sessions. For some of us the spiritual outpouring could become manifest immediately at our baptism. For many others it remains to be ‘fanned into flame’ through prayers and works of faith in the ministries we joined.

Over the most recent years we prepare for another Pentecost in our lives, by participating in nine days Novena to the Holy Spirit. This was designed to awaken us in our human spirits. It prepared us for a new Pentecost in our lives or a form of **“Baptism in the Spirit”**. Some achieved it through a form of spiritual experience, directed retreat, contemplation, adoration, or a trance. By participating in those activities, we have exposed ourselves to deep contact with the Holy Spirit free of charge.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the Disciples on Pentecost Sunday, they became empowered to witness for Christ right from the Upper Room. They were united in prayer in obedience to Christ when the Holy Spirit came upon them. From there they became witnesses in their daily lives among the nations. The Spirit of Christ makes our divisions cease and unity is achieved, (cf. John 17). This is the opposite of the divisions at Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1-9), our Vigil Mass reading. The Church teaches that there are Four Marks of a True Church: it is **One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic**. Our prayers are for more outpouring of the Seven classes of Spiritual Gifts given by the Holy Spirit to enable us to involve ourselves more and more deeply in the ministries of the one Church in the world, (cf. 1 Cor. 12:4-13). With the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we also have the Twelve Fruits of the Gifts, (cf. Gal. 5:22-23). The Church teaches us about the Three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and the Four Cardinal Virtues of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance. As present-day Christians we are continuing the “Acts of the Apostles” and would require **new Pentecost experiences** to deeply pray, discern, prophesy and evangelize the nations of today’s world, in a renewed spiritual awareness, urgency and vigor. This is what the past week has prepared us for. In the gospel the Lord breathed the Spirit on the Disciples (cf. John 20:19-23). He promised us the Spirit of truth, to guide us in all truth (cf. John 16:13-15; John 15:26-27). The Spirit will convict the world of “sin and righteousness and condemnation.” (John 16:8-11). As Christians, are we comfortable with truth? Does prejudice lead us to judge and condemn the innocent? Do we in conscience refuse to admit the evil of sin? The sign of our repentance

will also include our individual sacramental confessions for spiritual purity and absolution, given at the confessional by a duly ordained priest of the One Church, in unity of purpose as successors of the Apostles. In those ways, we are apostolic. And so, we claim and recite the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, as our belief, and as following in their footsteps, because they are our Profession of Faith.

Christians want to have the awareness of the presence and actions of the Holy Spirit in their lives, in community and individually. The reason why we would value our ministries in the church is because we understand the role of the Spirit in relation to our talents and spiritual gifts. Now that we have gone through the events of the seven weeks of the Easter Season, and immersed ourselves in spiritual exercises over the past nine days, let us match out to action as Disciples of Christ in our today's world, exercising the use of our spiritual gifts, beginning from our natural families and Church family. May the Lord bless, prosper and authenticate the work of our hands. Amen.