

Fr. Ryan homily May 31, 2020 (Pentecost)

Read: Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11 (63A); 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13;

John 20:19-23

A very happy Pentecost to everyone, I know many of us tend to think of this as the birthday of the church. And when we listen again to the readings of what happened on that first Pentecost how the disciples were gathered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews and how we know the Blessed Mother was there praying with them all during this time. Then the Holy Spirit rushed upon them and they were transformed, they were changed, and they went out from behind those locked doors. And as I was thinking about that and praying about that, I'm thinking what does that mean for us today. And what that means of course is just that for them as is for us. That same Holy Spirit with all His power and all His fire came and set them on fire, they went out and people watched them burn with love. And that's gotta be happening for us. What happens when the Holy Spirit comes upon us? What I think we need to focus on now more than anything is that He desires, and He brings unity. He desires that we be one. And that is a humongous undertaking on His part because so often as people, and yes as Americans, we focus on what divides us. You know there is racial tension and hatred that were hearing about on the news. You know, it's an election year, what fun this is gonna be right? There's political tension, an ideological division and we ask what's the best course of action concerning the coronavirus. Some say this, others say that and that even trickles down into our families and our parish. It can happen there too where there is division and dissension. And not this year but sometimes on Pentecost we get to hear about the tower of babble that we find in the book of Genesis. And when they were building this tower of babble, what did they say, they said let us make a name for ourselves. Let us make a name for ourselves. So, God had to come a split them up because it was all about vanity and glorifying themselves and making themselves supreme in this undertaking. And God said that's not good so we're gonna separate you, and He confused their language. When the Holy Spirit comes on Pentecost what He does is start to bring people back together. Where before there was division, now the Holy Spirit starts to unite people again. And you know when the apostles received that Holy Spirit they didn't just sit there and go well ain't I special, look at my gifts,

look at my life now, and my power and my peace. NO! They immediately went out to others to bring others to Christ. One of the sure signs of the Holy Spirit in someone's life is that they are others-centered, they're not self-centered. They care way more about bringing others to Christ than about what they get out of it. And to think about it, the mind of God is one. And so, when we all get united to the mind of God and we're centered around it we are gonna have the same thoughts about different things. And as we're striving to do that and praying for that, that's why St Paul can say there is no more slave or free, Jew or Greek, those divisions are gone because we have been made one in Christ. We have been put on the mind of Christ, if you will. So, when I only focus on me, that takes away the Holy Spirit. And what I get out of it, takes away the Holy Spirit. When I only look at what makes us different or what divides that takes away the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit desires and brings unity. And as we heard in the reading again today there is one body of Christ, correct? One body! And so, if my hand wants to do something different than the rest of my body, that's a problem, right? Because there is dissention. If one part of the body wants to go rogue, then all the body has to deal with that. My whole body has to be in unison. Yes, different parts and different roles but unified with one purpose and one role. The best way that we can do this as a church, ladies and gentlemen, is we gotta keep our eyes on Jesus. Because when we look at Jesus, we are one. When we look down and focus on ourselves, we are divided. And so how often do we look at ourselves? Even when we come to church, where is our focus? How often do we come just to focus on Jesus and what he wants? And when we just focus on Jesus, we forget about ourselves. Now the Holy Spirit can begin to do His work inside of us. And what happens when that spirit takes control is He makes us bear witness to others, He makes us evangelizers, who have forgotten about ourselves, we're desiring to bring other people know Jesus as we do. And so, one of the greatest ways a person can find out if they're living according to the spirit or living according to the flesh is am I living for others, am I bringing others to Christ? Or am I more concerned about myself. Me first, my gifts, and what I get out of it. Am I living for myself or am I being controlled by the spirit? Am I lead by the spirit in my desire to bring one-ness and unity? Unity into my family, into my work, my parish, my community. Am I honest with myself about my ego and what drives me to want something? Am I so sure that what I want is also what God wants? And so, we need to keep focused on Jesus and keep surrendering, keep surrendering, keep

surrendering to the Holy Spirit. All of the craziness that we're seeing going on in the news in these different cities, it's antithetical to what the spirit wants, is it not? Yes, there is a place for righteous anger, absolutely, but that anger should inspire us as Christians to bring unity and oneness back, not further chaos, not more division and destruction, only making things worse. And as we're trying to that as Christians, we know no one promised it was gonna be easy to bring unity. And that's why sacrifice has to be part of our lives and surrendering ourselves over and over again to the Holy Spirit. Some of you may know who Archbishop Oscar Ramirez was, he was named a saint in the church just a few years ago, but he was a Bishop down in El Salvador in the 1970's and he did outstanding things to fight poverty and to fight social injustice all by the power of the Lord and the Holy Spirit. He was, unfortunately, assassinated one day when he was celebrating mass, but Oscar Ramirez's mantra always was "I can't, you can". And that was his way of surrendering every moment; I can't, you can. I can't create the change in society that needs to happen but Holy Spirit you can by making me your instrument. I can't bring about greater unity and oneness but Holy Spirit you can if I surrender myself into your hands. And so, none of it has to do with ego, none of it has to do with pride. For oneness to and unity to be established we have to get pride and ego out of ourselves by giving ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Friends, when we look at this Gospel today, that when Jesus came and He brought them peace and He gave them the Holy Spirit, what was part of this gift of the Holy Spirit that He gave to the apostles? It was to bring reconciliation and to bring unity. And so, when we look at our own lives, when we choose to live outside of the spirit, that's when we see it. That's when we see division not unity by our words, by our actions, by our pride, by our ego. But even we know that if that happens, we can go back, we can be forgiven, we can start again. He can reconcile us again to God and to each other. Because that's the will of God. If you've been following the readings throughout the Easter season, both at daily and Sunday masses, we've been listening to a lot of what's called the priestly prayer of Jesus in the Gospel. In his prayer on the night before he was crucified, he's praying to the Father saying make them one with us Lord. As we are one, make them one. As I live in you, let them live in us. And this priestly prayer of Jesus, as He's praying it, what's the number one thing He's praying for? He's praying that we will be one. He's praying that we will be one. And so, if we're not one, then we need to repent. Lord so often I think I know your will better than anyone else, and I wind

up bringing even more division because of my pride. And so, Jesus come into my heart and heal me, bring me reconciliation. Bring me reconciliation with you and with my brothers and sisters, all of them, that we may truly be one. And so, this day of Pentecost isn't about us, it isn't about our gifts. This day of Pentecost, God gives us the greatest gift he has. It's Himself. To live within us so that we can go forth and not focus on what divides us but what unifies us. And what unifies us is almighty God. And we repent of those times when we fail to live in that unity. When we focused instead on our own little, individual things. You know, people talk about the fruit of the Holy Spirit. When we allow the Holy Spirit to make us one, Jesus gives us this amazing fruit of the spirit. He talks about one in the Gospel today, what does He give the apostles? Peace. And don't we all want peace? I know I do; my goodness, to be at peace knowing I'm in the will of God, seeking his will above all things. When we're making the effort to do those things, we're making an effort to live in unity, we're surrendering ourselves to the Holy Spirit, when we're keeping our eyes focused on Jesus, He gives us peace. And when we mess up, He offers us reconciliation to be at peace again. So today, on this feast of the Holy Spirit is being given to unify and bring oneness. Let's let Him bring oneness and unity into the world through us by staying focused on Jesus, by surrendering to the Holy Spirit, that we may be at peace with one another.

Amen