

## Homily for Pentecost 2020:

We have returned to the beginning.

This Easter Season we have worked through a section of the Acts of the Apostles as the Church grew and spread. Last week we went back to the beginning of the Book of Acts describing the Ascension. And today we get the follow-up – Pentecost, with The Holy Spirit coming to be the soul of the Church.

In the same way – on the Octave of Easter – we read from the same gospel passage we read today. On the evening of Easter Sunday – Christ came and gave the Holy Spirit.

We have come back to the beginning – to recall that Easter and Pentecost are part of the one saving action of God. Christ had to die and rise and Ascend so that we might be given the Holy Spirit.

Like the changing of the Seasons, the end of this Season and the beginning give the same meaning and purpose to our existence – God has come to save us and empower us to Bring His Salvation to the World.

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As a part of this great occasion, let us get to know God the Holy Spirit better this day, this week, this year.

The great mystery of our Faith is that God - who it can rightly be said is far above our understanding - still has revealed something about God's very nature. And we cannot understand it fully – but it makes sense that God is something more than us, His creation. Our experience of ourselves is that we are many human beings. Each of us has one human nature, and is one person. The very nature of God is that God is one, not many. However, God, though one, is three persons.

Indeed, far above our understanding.

But in our prayer, we often develop our relationship with the person of God the Father. For instance, most of our prayers at Mass are directed to the Father – albeit through the Son and in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

We also develop our relationship to The Son, thinking of Him as our friend, or brother, or shepherd, or master, or teacher, or guide, or our perfect example.

But though there are many prayers that have been composed to the person of the Holy Spirit – and though so many Bible verses speak of the Holy Spirit as “He,” or as one who guides us and who is our advocate – many of us often do not talk to the Holy Spirit as a person.

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Last week I mentioned the difference between knowing ABOUT Jesus and KNOWING Jesus. It is the same with the Holy Spirit.

A priest named Fr. David Poecking said this:

“...you don’t need to be a genius to understand...the law of gravity...Those of us with a technical education can work out the calculations, but the 12-year-old boys skateboarding in the parking lot of my church understand gravity through their own bones and muscles in ways I never will. I know *about* gravity, but those boys simply *know gravity*.”

“The same for knowing the Holy Spirit. We can have academic knowledge about the Spirit...But I doubt that helps many people...We can also have experiential knowledge of the fruits and gifts of the Spirit...But what about more intimate personal knowledge?”

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One of the ways we have a more personal knowledge of the Holy Spirit is by spending time with the Holy Spirit in our prayer time.

Let us talk to the Holy Spirit. Let us learn a prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit to help guide us and help us follow where He leads.

Let us thank the Holy Spirit for binding the Church as One.

Let us ask for the Gifts of the Spirit and the openness to use them according to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Let us talk with God the Holy Spirit as the Person He is.

Let us fall in love with the Holy Spirit.

If we were to read the rest of chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles, after the Holy Spirit descends – we see that Peter gives such a moving testimony that three thousand people were baptized that day.

That is still the example of what The Holy Spirit can do through us to bring God to the world.

Let us strengthen our prayer life to the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

I end with a prayer to the Holy Spirit attributed to Saint Augustine:

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit,  
that my thoughts may all be holy.

Move in me, Holy Spirit,  
that my work, too, may be holy.

Attract my heart, Holy Spirit,  
that I may love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may defend all that is holy.

Protect me, Holy Spirit,  
that I may always be holy.

Amen.

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