

Homily: Pentecost Sunday 2022: Cycle C: Acts 2: 1-11; Ps. 104; Rom 8: 8-17; Jn 14: 15-16. 23b - 26

“Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit helps us in our Life of Faith – if we are docile”

1. **The Holy Spirit helps us to be devout and to grow into that virtue of devotedness to the Catholic faith.** Today is the birthday of the Catholic Church, the completion of Jesus’s own Paschal mission to save the human race and establish the Church as the Ark of Salvation - which is why this is the last day of the Easter season. The Holy Spirit who is sent on Pentecost is the One to lead the Church into all Truth, the saving truth that leads us to Heaven - if embraced in love, in the hearts and lives of individual believers. The Holy Spirit is “*the soul of the Church*,” the protector of the Catholic Faith, the One who ensures that the Faith is handed down authentically from generation to generation, despite the weaknesses and sins of Church leaders, which is something we need to recognize in our time when the leadership hasn’t been great in many quarters. It is from the Holy Spirit working through the Church that we have received such gifts as *the Liturgical life of the Church, the 7 Sacraments, the devotional life of solid piety and prayer, the Canon of Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, and the canonization of saints*. Let’s ask him to help the human race to grow from hostility or ignorance or indifference toward the Catholic faith to a place of devotedness and gratitude.
2. **The Holy Spirit gives us the help we need to persevere in the Catholic faith until earthly death.** Again how this is sorely needed in our time which is becoming increasingly hostile to our Catholic faith. The reality is some of this the Church has brought on itself because of the sex abuse scandal and how much of that was badly handled by Church leadership. But on the other hand some have been looking for an excuse (e.g., Covid) to throw off the Catholic faith and to live in a more worldly way – since it is hard to live the authentic Catholic teaching when it comes to Faith and Morals. To persevere in the Catholic faith in the face of opposition from the world and other people, as well as dealing with our own internal temptations to take the easier path of doing what we want to do on a selfish level, is not easy – but is part of the Cross we must bear in docility in a

spirit of obedience to Jesus. It's not an accident that many young people fall away from the practice of their Catholic faith when they go off to college or get into the secular work world. It's often the 1st time, on their own, they have really dealt with people and professors that are hostile to the Catholic worldview and who also try to entice them with the sinful pleasures of the world, esp. in the area of sexuality, alcohol, drugs, and self-will - the things that can give immediate gratification and numb us to the pain of human existence - a real trick of the evil one - since he knows the only way out of the pain of life is thru the life of Faith.

3. **Patience:** *the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.* The Holy Spirit wants to help all of us live the new life Christ won for us through His life, death, and Resurrection for our salvation in every aspect of life, but we need **patience** to do so. He gives us 7 special gifts in our **Baptism** and which are renewed and deepened in our **Confirmation**. The gifts of *wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fear of the Lord, piety, counsel and fortitude* are like sails that lead us to the port of Heaven - if we patiently cooperate with the Holy Spirit and are **docile** or open to His daily inspirations to do good and avoid evil, and to love like Christ: by making of our lives a **self-gift** to our Heavenly Father, through Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. As St. Paul puts it so well in **Romans 12: 1-2**: *"And now, brothers and sisters, I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies (your lives) as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship. DO NOT conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you may judge what is God's will, what is good, pleasing and perfect."* This doesn't happen automatically; in fact, our fallen nature often rebels against the Holy Spirit. We have to be open to the Spirit coming down on each one on us in a tongue of spiritual flame, to help us fulfill our individual divine mission – why we were put on earth by God at this time in history. **We need to pray daily for that gift.** For as St. Hilary, put it, *"Unless the human soul absorbs the gift of the Spirit through faith, the human mind has the ability to know God but lacks the light necessary for that knowledge"* Come Holy Spirit; Come and transform us! God bless you.