

Pentecost Sunday
June 9, 2019
“Love Unleashed”

Acts 2:1-11
Rom 8:8-17
Jn 14:15...26

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

It is always a powerful and overwhelming experience to realize that someone loves us just for whom we really are. To be loved despite our faults and deficiencies – To be loved no matter how we look or what we have done – To be loved, yet leaving all our freedom intact – And to be loved unselfishly by someone without hope for their personal gain – is always a, potentially, life-changing experience!

Most parents love their children in this way. However, unfortunately, most children do not appreciate this until, often, it is too late – or only after their parents are gone.

When we realize that we are loved this way, we want to be truly worthy of that love – for, indeed, we seldom are at first. Thus, we strive to be better – We try to reciprocate that love in some way – We attempt to become all that the one loving us believes that we can be! So we change. Or, perhaps, we become changed by the very power of that love which has embraced us so completely!

This is what happened to the disciples of Jesus on that first Pentecost Sunday.

Jesus had left them. Jesus had departed to another dimension. There was so much they did not understand – There was so much that seemed unfinished – There was so much uncertainty and awareness of their personal shortcomings and sins!

However, Jesus had promised them the Advocate. He had promised them the Holy Spirit. As Jesus spoke for them to God, and for God to them – so would this new Advocate!

However, there were some prerequisites. As today’s Gospel selection reveals, it was imperative that the disciples love Jesus. And the proof of that love was how they kept his commandments – the greatest of which was love!

That love which united them to others, also united them to Jesus and to God. Furthermore, when united to God, all manner of things become possible!

What most people never know – or truly understand – is that the Holy Spirit is the reciprocal love of the Father for the Son, and the Son for the Father. Thus, this eternal and everlasting love becomes personified in the Holy Spirit. It's no wonder then, that when the Holy Spirit becomes present and acts, marvelous and even incredible things can begin to happen! This is what occurred at that first Pentecost so long ago!

The Holy Spirit manifested itself in a tornadic- sounding wind that created, rather than destroyed. The Spirit appeared as fire – the fire of divine love with all its power. And it completely transformed each of those upon whom it came to rest!

The disciples were instantly changed! They understood at last! The words of Jesus finally made sense! The true mission of Jesus was realized! Their own vocation and mission became possible and it began!

The disciples began to speak the native language of every nation and group that had gathered. They began to proclaim the marvelous deeds of God that Jesus had taught, revealed, and accomplished. And they went forth to become advocates themselves, doing for others what Jesus had done for them out of love!

Brothers and Sisters, we have all received the Holy Spirit. This was conferred upon us with our baptism and confirmation. But the power of the Holy Spirit can be fully unleashed only at the time of our personal Pentecost from God! Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to his disciples on Easter Sunday night. But the power of the Spirit was unleashed at Pentecost!

Today, St. Paul tells us that we are not in the “flesh”, but in the “spirit”. By the “flesh”, he means all that can be selfish and self-centered within us. By the “spirit”, he means all that is godly and according to Jesus and his Gospel. If we live in and with the Holy Spirit, then we are, truly, brothers and sisters of Jesus, children of God the Father, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Truly, we suffer with Jesus whenever we rise above our selfishness and self-centeredness in love. We are crucified with Jesus whenever we suffer in any way because of the godlessness of others and the culture in which we live. But as we suffer with Jesus, so shall we rise with him with our own resurrection some day!

So, let us pray, today, that we prepare ourselves for the power of the Holy Spirit as it comes again and again in our lives and hearts with its love!

Amen.

June 9, 2019

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