

Pentecost – 2020
Resumption of Mass after Coronavirus
Acts 2.1-11//1 Corinthians 12.3b-7,12-15// John20.19-23

This year, Easter was unlike any other Easter we have known...

→the church doors were shut; our seats were empty; this pulpit and choir area were silent.

→everything seemed different...and yet...it was still Easter!

...I remember once having a discussion with a friend who baked and served her guests what she called a “flourless cake” for dessert.

→I remember making the remark...that if it didn't contain flour...then it wasn't really a cake.

→[however] she argued...that you could eliminate flour and still have a cake.

→[that] began a discussion between us about what you could eliminate from the recipe and still have a cake.

→[and] it was actually amazing just how much was not essential

→sugar, salt, spices, flavoring – you can eliminate it all and still produce a cake!

→[well] in a similar way, much was eliminated from Easter this year...and yet we still had Easter...in fact, over the past few weeks...a lot has been eliminated from our lives...and yet we continue to live.

→even without the sacraments, Easter happened!

→because...it came down to just a few essentials: faith in the Risen Lord, our prayer, a way to communicate the message through technology and a way to celebrate in our own unique and special ways.

→some people found ways to celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection by phone, or on the computer, some shared the celebration within their home and some watched on television.

→[and so] perhaps in these days, as we begin to resume our lives, we can do so with a **newness** in our appreciation for what truly is essential. PAUSE

→today we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost

→all of our readings...significantly express the true meaning of this feast.

→the first and second readings are closely related...

→from the Acts of the Apostles...we find the disciples gathered in one place...and suddenly there comes from the sky a strong driving wind...filling the entire house....

→astounded and amazed they begin speaking in the many languages of the Spirit...

→On that first Pentecost...the disciples opened themselves up to the working and presence of the HOLY SPIRIT in their lives....[and] that made all the difference in the world and in who they were

→today, [on this feast of Pentecost] we too are being asked to open ourselves up to the Spirit...to allow the Spirit to take hold of us thus making a difference in who we are

→to make our weakness become our strength

→to turn our boredom into enthusiasm

→to allow our complacency be overcome by passion

→then in the second reading...we hear from St. Paul.....how through such diversity among us...there remains one constant...**the call** each one of us has received to share our talents, our gifts, and our capabilities with one another

Paul speaks at great length about the activity of the Spirit and how the Spirit calls us to different forms of service and ministry

→we are **BOLDLY** reminded that no matter how different WE ARE, we belong to the same body, the same church, the same community.

→and finally.....we return to the familiar reading from John....the same account that we heard on the second Sunday after Easter when Jesus appeared to his disciples (minus Thomas)

→the disciples are huddled together with the doors locked, frightened for their lives, jumping at every sound from the street below, wondering whether the authorities who had just crucified Jesus would be coming after them next.

→those days must have been a strange and frightening period for the disciples... much like what we have all experience over the past few months...

→their world had been dramatically altered...they had remain isolated in the same Upper Room.

→and the way they looked at life...at faith...at the world...and the way they looked at one another had completely changed...without their anticipating it, without their planning for it AND without their consent to it...

→sounds familiar....doesn't it????

PAUSE

→then Jesus appears in their midst, and gives them his peace

Saying ... *“peace be with you...breathing on them to receive the Holy Spirit.”*

→uncertain of what their future held....being in isolation from their normal routines....the SPIRIT comes to them with a noise like a strong driving wind and fills the place of their quarantine...

→although they are confused and afraid...the SPIRIT comes not to console them but to empower them enabling them to proclaim the Good News and to live once again....

PAUSE

→that same Spirit is given to you and me today as well...

→as we gather, after so long an absence, we are comforted to see friends we have missed.

→we are encouraged to worship again and we are thankful to participate in the Eucharist and share holy communion.

→the Spirit is among us...making all these gifts possible...not only to console us but to empower us!

→I am convinced that every one of us here today has been moved by the Spirit in our lives...

→every one of us...by our belief and faith has been moved by the Spirit to do what we can to make this place, this life...a bit better....*PAUSE*

→we have all been impressed by government officials, health care workers, first responders and others who have fearlessly continued their work during this time.

→and I am sure that if we were to share our thankfulness with them, most would tell us that they were merely doing their job.

→that is what has made them the heroes of our time...doing what was needed because they could...because of what they were called to do

→this feast of Pentecost...this special day of gathering here...reminds us that we have been called to served...

→TO BE a beacon of hope and promise...of comfort and care

→that we belong to each other as members of the Body of Christ.

→and that all of us are bound to one another in spirit, faith and care.

PAUSE

→the word for “spirit” in both the Hebrew and Greek, is the exact same word for “breath.”

So today, on this Feast of Pentecost, let us be thankful for the breath of God, that fills us and gives us life

→creating in us a new people with a message of hope to a world that is now different and changed...

→let us breath in -----remembering and reflecting, allowing God to create through us a better place...

→and let us also breath out....as we minister and bear witness to the risen Lord by our acts of service and care to a desperate world in need of hope and peace

→the Spirit has given fire to each one of us...in this time above all ...we must make sure it burns bright!