

St Pius & St Anthony Pentecost Sunday Year B2

Pentecost – Our first reading from Acts tells a dramatic story with details including, 1) “noises” 2) “a strong driving wind” and then 3) “filling the entire house”. Now, what I hear with those descriptions is the insight that, yes, ***some houses can talk!*** (I know people refer sometimes when they are digging for information on something, “*If these walls could talk...*”, but in Pentecost’s case I’d say the house does TALK!) Being a priest, and priests seem to move a lot, or back when I substituted a lot back early on in my priesthood, I can testify that, yes, different houses do talk! (I bet we’ve all heard some of these: like maybe the chatter and clinking of refrigerator compressors coming on and going off, or water heaters gurgling, fans whirring or lights even buzzing, or the constant drip-drip of faucets, along with the louder popping and cracking of attic trusses expanding and contracting with temperature changes (I once stayed in a rectory with a Culligan Water Purification system, that I learned goes through monthly ‘refreshing’ process (basically a backwashing of the system) and it was programmed to refresh outside regular hours (at 2:00 am), which just meant I was awakened at 2:00 am jumping out of bed to hear the ‘SHHHHHHHHHH’ sound coming out of the kitchen - I imagined the kitchen faucet was spraying all over everything. So, yes, houses do have languages. Maybe the best example of this comes from my childhood, back in the pre-‘central heating’ of homes days). We grew up with an old floor furnace in the middle hallway ground floor, at the foot the steps-our rooms were upstairs. It was its own mystery to us, but it talked or called us out of bed every cold winter morning. We would not get out of bed, until we heard its clicks, the sound of flowing gas and then a little bursting pop sound that was our invitation to come follow its warm waves of heat rising, so we’d run down out from under our covers to sit around the large square grate on the floor. We never walked on the grate (not that it would it fire brand us with its small rectangles; it just wasn’t comfortable for bare feet!), but we sat around like a home hearth-fireplace! Not only did it talk but it also ate – one non-uniform school day my brother left his full-polyester favorite short on the grate to warm it while he went brushing his teeth and the furnace ate a couple large holes in it!

So, with our Pentecost scene from the Acts reading, we hear about a house that moves its inhabitants to speak up themselves! The house grumbled and shook with ‘strong driving wing noise’ (Acts 2:2) and ‘tongues of fire’ appeared over them (Acts 2:3) leading them to spilling out on to the streets or public square with a message to proclaim to everyone. More miraculous than the noise of the house talking (shaking-squealing-running them out) is the new language the

apostles speak as a result of it. Now here is miracle to talk about. The apostles themselves rumble out into the streets preaching (likely singing) some language that everybody, regardless of their own mother tongue, they all can understand. Considering the multiplicity of languages/ethnicities represented in Jerusalem already for the Jewish High Holy Day of their Feast of Weeks (*a Week of Weeks since Passover Feast – now the 50th day since Passover-when they celebrated God giving His Words-Law-Language to the Israelites through Moses at Mt Sinai in Desert after leaving Egypt*), there were all the known languages represented here (Acts 2:5 says ‘every nation under heaven’). This miraculous language that the apostles were preaching, is a New Message. Their words amount to a new project of building bridges to unite the human family again with one language announcing God’s reconciliation in Jesus with us, and all humans with one another (*a building project to overcome the failed one from the tower of Babel that scattered all people with selfish talk among themselves: Babel’s language was people pridefully saying, “Look what we can do!”*, while the new Pentecostal language was the apostles humbly saying, “Look what God can do!”-Acts 2:11 says they were “speaking of the mighty acts of God among us”).

This was New! We can remember from last week’s gospel Mark 16:17, Jesus had said, as accompanying signs of His mission, “they will drive out demons, and speak new languages”. On this Pentecost morning, we hear the apostles ‘speak this new language of the Spirit and drive out demons of division (demons tear us apart-holy spirit draws us together).

So, how about this new language that as followers of Jesus answering His call, we are supposed to speak? We need training in this tongue. What might this universal language of God, language of the Spirit be like? Well, some people say it is like any of the universal languages such as the language of music (we say it crosses language divides) or the language of love that speaks to all hearts of intuitive goodness, or the language of food generously shared with any hungry mouth. I suggest that we do speak this universal language any time we communicate any of Jesus’ sentiments/concerns or simply even repeat Jesus’ own words (Maybe as a measure, after any word I share with another person, I need to ask myself, ‘Does that sound like something that would come across Jesus’ lips?’ But again, we can speak the Holy Spirit’s language by simply passing along any of the words of Jesus- I am sure we all have our favorites from Him.

(‘Come to me all you weary I give you rest’ Matt 11:28, ‘Love one another as I loved you’ John 13:34, “Whatever you do to least of my brethren, you do to me’ Matt 25:40, even Jesus words from the cross ‘Father, forgive them.....’ Luke 23:34 or ‘Behold your mother..... behold your son’ John 19:26 Here Jesus is motivating

our compassion for everyone by reminding us that each person is someone's son or someone's sister/mother-love 'em for them. Again, we all have favorite words from Jesus, so pass them along to others as the language of the holy Spirit. If they mean so much to me, then share them with somebody else (and this doesn't have to be preachy). Just passing on a little of the language of God to another person, lets Jesus speak to them... and it moves us out of our own chatter (gets us out of ourselves) to draw God's people back together – involves us in the work/mission of Jesus, the Holy Spirit uniting again the human family!