

*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*

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A few verses after this morning's Epistle we read that the great crowd of people drawn by the commotion of the first Pentecost accuse the Disciples of being drunk! Our Patron Saint, Peter, newly filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost, stands up in the midst of them and preaches a beautiful and eloquent sermon on the Death, Resurrection of Jesus Christ, of Baptism and repentance. This same Peter who had denied our Lord three times during the Crucifixion, who ran and hid after His death and Resurrection. This was the very same Peter who was so filled with fear at those events our Lord tried to prepare him for. And now he, a man of little to no education, and certainly without schooling in philosophy or oratory, stands up before a crowd of thousands and preaches an incredible sermon. He gives them the promise, *repent of your sins, be baptized, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off, and to as many as the Lord our God will call.* The beginning of this promise was fulfilled before his very eyes, as three thousand were converted on the spot and were all baptized.

We have hopefully all been Baptized. Most of us have been Confirmed, and we are taught that through these steps we have been given the Holy Spirit. As our Bishop likes to say, the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been unwrapped for us at our Confirmation. But let us not forget that the same Holy Spirit which filled St. Peter and the Disciples on the day of Pentecost is the same Holy Spirit that fills us today. Inspired by St. Peter's example, we must pray for two gifts of the Holy Spirit in particular to be effective Christians. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will instill in us the gifts of courage and wisdom.

We must pray that God will grant us courage to resist fear. Remember that St. Peter denied our Lord three times out of fear during the Crucifixion and he had repented three times before the Lord's Ascension. Now he is given the courage needed to stand before a multitude and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It takes courage to live the Christian life and stand up for Jesus in this modern world, just as it took courage in the days of St. Peter. The crowd that gathered that first Pentecost mocked and laughed at the Disciples. They could not explain how they heard these uneducated men speaking in every language known to man, and so their reaction to the extraordinary, unusual, and paranormal was to discount it. But those disciples who had run and hid during the arrest, execution and Resurrection of Jesus, fearing what angry mobs would do to them, are now filled with the courage of the Holy Ghost. Instead of hiding, they step forward and

proclaim the promises of God. After Pentecost they go to the ends of the world baptizing and making disciples of all nations and are courageous enough to even die for the Lord's sake.

When the Holy Ghost gives the gift of courage to the Apostles and to us, He reveals the Wisdom that Jesus Christ receives from the Father. The sermon that St. Peter preaches that first Pentecost Sunday shows forth an incredible depth of understanding of the history and prophets of the Old Testament. The wisdom that the Holy Ghost brings revealed to them that everything that had come before, from Genesis to King David and the prophets, was a preparation for the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Ghost. But the Holy Ghost went even further and continued through inspiring the Apostles to develop Doctrine and to formulate the Tradition of the Catholic Church. Jesus had told the disciples this Himself, *the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* These men from Galilee, from a backwater town in Israel, who likely had no education are given the ability to preach and convert kings and scholars, and even to debate and hold their own with the rabbis and temple priests.

Now we may say, well we are not all called to preach like St. Peter, we are not all called to even teach, and not many of us consider ourselves to be very wise or courageous. But we are called as Christians to be wise and courageous. We are called to raise our children in the fear and love of God, we are called to show Jesus to our friends and families, we are called to be constant witnesses of Jesus Christ to all people at all times. To do this effectively takes a healthy dose of heavenly wisdom and heavenly courage. It takes courage to repent of our sins and be confessing Christians. We are called by God and expected to be courageous enough to do the right thing in every situation and thereby to show forth the Love of God to all people. Likewise we need wisdom to guide us through the experiences and trials of this world. We need also the Holy Spirit to open our ears to hear and learn the Wisdom of the Gospel and to apply it to our hearts.

The same Holy Spirit that filled St. Peter with wisdom and courage on that first Pentecost wishes to fill us too. But do not be fooled into believing that the Holy Spirit is an "encouraging warm and fuzzy feeling." Pentecost and the descent of the Holy Spirit turn the world upside down. At Pentecost, Jesus' promise has been fulfilled, every fear is dispelled, every doubt is removed, and Jesus is declared to be the Divine Son of God. This very same Jesus Christ, the Son of God, comes to us now by the Holy Spirit and through gifts of bread and wine. We are not orphans,

He has not left us comfortless, but we are given a constant companion through the Holy Spirit who longs to dwell in and with us, who longs to fill us with Holy Courage and Holy Wisdom. But we must be receptive to the Holy Spirit.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to dwell in and with us. You will hear these words again in a few moments at Mass. We are required to prepare our hearts, to have the wisdom to recognize the sins in our lives and the courage to confess them so that we may come to the altar of God worthily and receive the Body and Blood of Jesus. We are expected to be filled with the wisdom and courage of the Holy Ghost to recognize that our lives depend upon Holy Communion. We must have the wisdom to recognize that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us requires us to receive Holy Communion. May God give us the wisdom to recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our dependence on Holy Communion, and the courage to live a life marked and filled with the Holy Spirit. Amen.