

**SCREEN: Happy Birthday!**

**ME:** Today we celebrate Pentecost, the birthday of the Church,  
so, Happy Birthday everybody!

Should we sing?

Did anybody bring a cake?

Maybe next year.

On Pentecost, we not only celebrate the whole Church,  
but our parish of St. Pius X.

We have so much to celebrate.

St. Pius X is a parish with a unique call and vision.

A vision I know is from God and is being directed by the Holy Spirit.

Now, you might be wondering,

what makes our parish unique from other churches?

Well, did you know we are called, *“the screen church”*,  
because we use screens for worship?

It’s true!

Screens are more common in other parts of the country,  
but I’m pretty sure we’re the only parish in our archdiocese  
using screens at every weekend Mass.

Another thing that makes us unique is our huge commitment to  
kids in worship.

Every weekend at our 3 biggest Masses we offer childcare  
and SLAM, our children’s worship.

We also changed our Tuesday afternoon CCD to Sunday morning KidMin  
and redesigned the entire program to make it  
more engaging and small group centered.

Another thing about us that is unique is our monthly Friday Night Praise,

which we began last Fall.

90 minutes every first Friday evening of prayer,  
contemporary praise music and adoration.

We've also offered adult small groups for the past five years.

That's something you don't find in many parishes.

I could go on blowing our own horn,

but I hope you get my point about our parish being unique with  
so much to celebrate.

**SCREEN: This Is Us main screen**

Today's birthday celebration is also the final week  
of our message series titled, This Is Us.

And we conclude hearing about the amazing gift that Christ gave to  
the Apostles on Pentecost.

**GOD:** To describe the gift, I'll begin with a quick recap.

Last week was Ascension.

Jesus gave some final instructions, told the Apostles to return to Jerusalem  
and wait for his gift to arrive, then he rose to the heavens.

They returned to the Upper Room where they'd been hiding to wait.

Today's first reading picks up the story from there.

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled,  
they were all in one place together.*

**SCREEN: And suddenly there came from the sky**

**a noise like a strong driving wind,**

**and it filled the entire house in which they were.**

**Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire,**

**which parted and came to rest on each one of them.**

**And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit**

**and began to speak in different tongues,  
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.**

Every year we hear the story of Pentecost.

We've heard it so many times that it can sound like no big deal to us.

We tell ourselves,

*"Yeah, there was a wind, a noise, they spoke in tongues.*

*I know all this."*

No, this was huge.

It was surprise that none of the Apostles saw coming.

The promise of the Father, the Advocate, the gift of the Holy Spirit arrived and the Church was born.

But it gets even better.

Because what happened in the Upper Room was only Part One.

The Apostles had to decide what to do with their gift.

Was it something just for them?

A reward for their faithfulness, a prize for sticking around?

Should they stay locked in the Upper Room and enjoy the moment?

No, they knew this gift was too good to keep to themselves.

And because their hearts were open

they could hear the Holy Spirit give these instructions for Part Two:

**SCREEN: 1 unlock the door**

**2 step outside**

**3 go make disciples**

And that's what they did.

They unlocked the door of the Upper Room,

took a step outside of the room - *they went out in the streets* -

and made disciples by sharing the gift of the Holy Spirit.

They made over three thousand disciples the first day!

Make no mistake, what they did took real courage.

The safest plan would have been to stay where they were.

But they didn't do that.

In an instant, everything changed for them and for the Church.

They heard the Holy Spirit telling them to go someplace new

and do new things and they headed in that direction.

**YOU:** This Pentecost, the Church of 2019 needs to follow their example.

The same Holy Spirit they received has been given to us.

What is the amazing gift for?

It is not a reward or prize; not something to keep to ourselves.

No, it is a gift to be shared so the Church keeps growing.

The Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today:

*open the door,*

*take a step outside, and*

*go make disciples.*

The greatest temptation facing parishes today is the mindset of:

*"let's stick with what is comfortable and with what we know.*

*Let's just keep doing what we've always done and hope that something changes."*

Someone said that's the definition insanity:

doing the same thing over and over expecting a different result.

Here's a quote from the Holy Father:

**SCREEN:** "The moment has arrived when we must recognize the signs of the times, seize the opportunity, and look far ahead."

Now, this wasn't said by Pope Francis, or Pope Benedict or even Pope St. John Paul II.

No, this is from Pope Saint John XXIII.

He said this in 1963!

If it was true 56 years ago, how much more true is it today?

The signs of the times are telling us that the Church needs a new

Pentecost, a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit,

a powerful wind to get us moving.

And the key word there is 'move'.

Jesus didn't say to his followers, put up a building,

open the doors and see who shows up.

Someone has labeled that the 'Field of Dreams' concept of church planting:

*If you build it they will come.*

That worked in the 1950's.

It worked in 1962 when our parish was founded.

It doesn't work any more.

Field of Dreams only works in the movies.

No, Jesus's command to his followers was "go".

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit literally blew the Apostles out of the room

and said, *go make disciples.*

**SCREEN: blank red background**

Our Church is a movement with a mission to go out and bring people in.

And we know it works.

It worked then, it still works today.

We've seen it work here at St. Pius.

For the past two weeks you've heard stories about families who heard the

Holy Spirit calling them to step outside their comfort zone,

try something new and how it made all the difference.

At this time I am going to invite Katie Skerpon and Jen Buter, two members of our staff forward to share one final story with you.

**AFTER:** Thank you Katie and Jen and thank you Brooklyn!

**SCREENS:** photos of our kids & students

Brooklyn is part of St. Pius's next generation.

What is the faith of the next generation worth?

EVERYTHING!

I am asking you to envision a future for this parish that you and I may not see.

The commitment to financial support you give today is also for future generations...your children's children.

And it is for all those not yet here that God will lead here in the years to come.

See, so much of what we are about at St. Pius is "next generation ministry".

Next generation ministry.

It's about raising up disciples who will lead long after we're gone.

Everything we are now doing; from all our programs for kids & students, to our message series, our small groups,

our opportunities for ministry...it's all about

equipping this generation and the next to keep making disciples.

So to ask that question again,

*what is the faith of the next generation worth?*

EVERYTHING!

It's what we must be about to keep growing and honor the gift of the Holy Spirit we have received.

So, This Is Us!

**SCREEN:** This Is Us main screen

For our parish vision to become a reality,  
each of you has to be willing to take a step;  
a step in faith with a commitment to financial support.

In the past two weeks you've heard this message.

I've written to you and asked for your commitment.

And I really need everyone to commit.

If you are a regular giver, thank you for your support.

I'm asking you to increase your giving.

If you are not yet committed, I'm asking you to give the parish  
your financial support.

As we did last weekend, you can make your commitment right after Mass.

In the entranceway you can enroll in Faith Direct, our parish's  
online giving platform.

If you already use Faith Direct and want to increase your support,  
you can do that today too.

This past week I increased my giving for the coming year.

If you prefer to use your offertory envelopes and are committing to increase  
your giving you can stop in the entranceway and leave us your name and  
address as a sign of your commitment.

This isn't a contract, not legally binding, but it would be very helpful to me  
to get a picture of our finances going forward.

**WE:** I am energized every day by the vibrant faith I see at St. Pius X  
Church.

Just like at the first Pentecost, I feel a wind of change blowing.

The Holy Spirit is calling us to go someplace new.

This Pentecost, let's keep opening the door, taking steps and

keep making disciples.

If you believe, as I do, that *THIS IS US*, let us together say, amen.

AMEN! +