

[Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104; 1 Cor. 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23]

Veni Sancte Spiritus! Come, Holy Spirit! The title of today's Sequence, to be sung after the Second Reading and before the Gospel Acclamation, is an exuberant reminder of this robust and active feast we celebrate. There are four Sequences provided for four different feast days: Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, and Our Lady of Sorrows. You probably would recognize the Sequence for Our Lady of Sorrows – the "Stabat Mater" which we sing after each of the Stations of the Cross during Lent when we move from Station to Station.

I'm glad Michael sang the one for today's Feast of Pentecost. The Pentecost Sequence underscores for us that the primary actor on Pentecost is not any one of the fishermen apostles, bravely preaching in the streets of Jerusalem like they were born to it. Rather, the Sequence declares, it's the elusive Holy Spirit that sheds divine light on our gloomy reality, comforting and refreshing us, healing our wounds, renewing our strength, and washing our guilt away. And that's just for starters.

Can you imagine what the first Pentecost was like? What a contrast from what occurred only days earlier in one Gospel, and earlier the same day in another Gospel. Frightened apostles huddled in a locked upper room. A band of disciples watching Jesus ascend out of sight, with these farewell words to Jesus in their hearts, "They worshipped Him, but they doubted." Those same apostles, with Mary, the Blessed Mother of Jesus, then spending nine days ("Novena") waiting in prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Sounds like they had a nine-day quarantine of their own!

Today, the waiting is over! Inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Apostles, once considered simple and uneducated, are now speaking with great eloquence in a language everybody can understand! How is all of this possible? Through God's power, through open hearts and through a willingness to say "YES!" to God when we are challenged to radical change in our lives. How has this time of quarantine changed YOUR life? Have any attitudes or notions about life and about faith changed? Send me an email and let me know: frnz@smdeporres.com.

Add to that guidance for all our straying steps, plus the bestowal of those seven gifts we once memorized to recite to our bishops on Confirmation day long ago. What are they? Wisdom. Understanding. Knowledge. Counsel. Fortitude. Reverence. Wonder and Awe in God's Presence, which we used to call Fear of the Lord. Cribbed from an ancient prophecy of Isaiah, this shower of gifts is available to all who acknowledge the indwelling Spirit. Do we believe this?

How often do we use our sevenfold blessings -- or any single aspect of it? We do it quite well at St. Martin de Porres Parish. Now we need the bold courage to proclaim it our homes, our schools, our work and in the marketplace.

This weekend, Archbishop Allen Vigneron is sending us his latest pastoral letter, which outlines the next stage of "Unleash the Gospel." He will also be sending to all the faithful the link

to a video introducing “Families of Parishes”, a second video narrating our missionary journey, a set of Frequently Asked Questions, and a link to a new “Family of Parishes” website. Please consult these resources to find out more information. I and all the pastors will be sent the same information as you will. More will come, I’m sure!

We may need fresh language to describe ancient understandings, but that doesn’t make the concepts themselves obsolete. In the 21st century, we believers do need to be penetrated by the Divine. Jesus has breathed His Spirit on his Church. This act can change everything, and it’s meant to. That same breath of God was given to us at our Baptism and at our Confirmation.

How do we need to see things differently and speak in a new language that everyone can understand in our Church and in our world? How can we take our different kinds of spiritual gifts, our different forms of service, and our different workings to “tell the Good News” of Jesus Christ? The Archbishop of Detroit, our Chief Shepherd, will lead the way and show us how!

Our RCIA candidates are with us today and for the next two weekends in their final stages of preparation to become fully initiated Catholics. Let us be examples of faith, hope and loving acts of kindness to help them on their way. ALLELUIA and AMEN!

The Pentecost Sequence

Come, O Holy Spirit, come! From Your bright and blissful Home, rays of healing light impart.

Come, Father of the poor, Source of gifts that will endure, Light of every human heart.

You of all consolers best, of the soul most kindly Guest, quickening courage do bestow.

In hard labor You are rest, in the heat You refresh best, and Your solace give in our woe.

O most blessed Light divine, Let Your radiance in us shine, And our inmost being fill.

Nothing good by man is thought, nothing right by him is wrought,
when he spurns Your gracious Will.

Cleanse our souls from sinful stain, fill our dryness with Your rain,
heal our wounds and mend our way.

Bend the stubborn heart and will, melt the frozen, warm the chill,
guide the steps that go astray.

On the faithful who in You, Trust with childlike piety, Deign Your sevenfold gift to send.

Give them virtue's rich increase, Saving grace to die in peace,
give them joys that never end. Amen. Alleluia.