

Homily St Pius & St Anthony Pentecost Sunday Year B

Pentecost! I always wonder what is the greatest miracle of Pentecost! The earthquaking, shaking home, the internally whooshing wind (we don't get the sense of tornadic gusts outside on the streets), the transformation from fear to fortitude of the apostles, or the language interpretation miracle that somehow God used the common voice of Peter and the apostles to speak to every heart of people gathered in Jerusalem. And we heard the list of how many different languages & ethnicities were represented that day – somehow they all heard the same noises coming out of the apostles' lips, but they processed them to understand the good news of God in their own language! It is all a marvel to me, until I remember that we are dealing with God (God made us, so God knows, how to get His message to us!)

Some people have described this miracle of speech as God utilizing the language of the spirit (maybe what some people call a 'prayer language' or what every sensitive human can understand). Would it be too much to call it God's own language –his red phone line to each human soul, or bat phone straight to the human heart? Maybe it is what we humans call the universal language-maybe the language of love, the language of the heart, or the language of angels - music. Whatever we call it, on that Pentecost morning, the Spirit was speaking through the apostles and the people received it as acts of God trying to reach them (each one). And the church grew tremendously from it so people responded to God's speech, His language of the Spirit calling the people together again as God's own.

This miracle makes me think back through all of Jesus interactions with people to see if Jesus had performed any speech miracle before Pentecost. I think He did. I think of times that Jesus seems to speak in transcendentally telephonic-telepathic ways. For example, the woman with a hemorrhage in Mark 5:32-33. She had said 'If only I touch his clothes', but then after being healed-of course Jesus knows it- He looks & asks, but I think He spoke to her (somehow communicating to her through the healing energy that left Him) inviting her to come straight up to talk to Him. She was just going to grab and go, yet she stayed-she heard him inside her. Or how about His healing of the mute-deaf man in Mark 7:33, (Of course a deaf mute man can't hear by definition, so how do they

connect at first, except through a pre-or extra-verbal way.) when Jesus took him aside from the crowd, He is already speaking to the man's inmost heart. Or on what 'unheard' of possible level language did Jesus speak (certainly out of our range-on quantum level) when He calmed the stormy seas (Mark 4:39-said "Be still, calm") What language does wind-water understand to follow course? So Jesus was familiar a language to speak to all creation; maybe by definition a Savior speaks a language that everyone can understand (because He does we call Him -Word).

Certainly, this is more than we can handle- But that is why Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit. In John 16:12-13, He says "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you to all truth." So it is the Spirit that lets us maybe speak, but at least understand its language. St Paul says as much too in Romans when he writes that "Spirit too comes to aid our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings" (Romans 8:26). So the Spirit can speak in us or though us. But we have to be open and we have to invite it in.

(I think that is the language of the Spirit; again whether we call it the language of prayer, love of the heart. We have an intuitive sense of this language I think when we hear people say things, like 'could you read the room-all the tension in there?' or saying, "I know she said she was okay when I asked, but her voice was trembly, something's wrong' . or don't we say all the time that we can read between the lines picking up body language, microsigns, gestures, like the classic one of someone telling you 'oh yes absolutely, yes' all the while they are shaking their head side to side. We could spend all day talking about different times we've picked up 'mixed signals' from others. Parents are great at this when reading their kids, 'did I ever hear as a kid, "Mister, you better work on your tone". Such examples introduce this more comprehensive language of the Holy Spirit. This more universal language I think is what Peter was speaking!)

How do we participate in this Spirit of Pentecost? Our gospel today tells that Jesus gave a first portion of this language when he appeared on resurrection morning to the apostles (John 20:21-23). Jesus breathed on them-gave them the Spirit- and the **words of peace and forgiveness**. That is God's language-Peace and Forgiveness. If you are sharing peace and forgiveness with others, you got it-you are speaking the language of the Spirit. We cooperate better, hearing and speaking this language of the Spirit ourselves, when we ask for it and tune ourselves into it. As you came into church today, someone handed you a Holy Spirit Medallion with the 'The Holy Spirit Prayer' on it. (St Paul said 'Spirit prays in us--gives us the words') God's language is always the right word, right spirit, right

motive, right tone, right time. How can we ever speak His word to another, unless we first ask God for it. That's what we say with Holy Spirit prayer 'Come Holy Spirit- Give me the right words, right tone and right time to speak your voice'.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth.

Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

We should think of the Holy Spirit's vocabulary as the actual words we refer to as the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit: the gifts (Isaiah 11:1-3) are Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge , Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord, and the fruits are (Gal 5:22-23) ***love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*** That's our Christian vocabulary, and using these words we can bet we are always being guided by the Holy Spirit.

Keep the Holy Spirit Medallions close to you to remind you – that all we do, all we say should be directed by Holy Spirit – and it all starts by praying to Spirit and remaining open to receive Him.

PS. I want to thank the generous donor of the medallions who ensured that everyone participating this weekend at mass received one!