

Solemnity of Pentecost Mass of the Day A/2020

Let me start this homily by reminding us what we already know about the Holy Spirit through our Catechism and other teachings of Religious Education or RCIA. The Holy Spirit is, indeed, one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. With the Father and the Son, they form one and indivisible God.

Though he is distinct from the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit is nonetheless of the same nature with them. He lives in communion with the Father and the Son. He proceeds from the Father and the Son and, with the Father and the Son he receives same adoration and same glory.

The Holy Spirit can appear in different forms. In the case of the baptism of Jesus, for instance, he appeared under the form of a dove. In the case of Pentecost, as we heard in the first reading, he appeared under the form of wind and fire. Like a strong wind, the Holy Spirit can transform everything he touches and every situation for the good of those who love Jesus, in general, and for the good of the church, in particular. Like a fire, the Holy Spirit can destroy sins and any obstacle that prevents us from receiving Jesus as the Lord of our lives.

Sometimes, there is no way of recognizing the invisible and mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit rather than by the actions he produces in the persons he has touched. For instance, he can give courage and boldness to bear witness to Jesus. This is what we see in the case of the disciples, as we heard in the first reading.

In order to appreciate this action, we have to remember what happened to the disciples with the death of Jesus. In fact, following the death of Jesus, the disciples went in hiding because of fear of the Jews. Suddenly, at Pentecost, they went out and started talking about Jesus. That change came from the power of the Holy Spirit who gave them courage to speak and bear witness to Jesus.

Moreover, each of the different people present in Jerusalem at that that day, could hear the disciples speaking in the language of their nation of the mighty acts of God. How would such a phenomenon be possible if it were not through the power of the Holy Spirit? It was the power of the Holy Spirit that created the unity we see at Pentecost. That power of the Holy Spirit operates in the sacraments of the Church by making our salvation effective through our confession of faith in Jesus Christ.

Another way that the Holy Spirit manifests his presence is through the gifts he inspires. Spiritual gifts have to be distinguished from natural gifts. For instance, someone might have a gift of music or being a great politician or a fantastic athlete. This is a natural gift that has nothing to do with a spiritual gift.

The spiritual gifts, on the contrary are given by the Holy Spiritual. They are the manifestations of the power of God through which people are invested with special spiritual strength to lead a type of life beyond human capacities and to always act according to God's will, for his glory.

These gifts are of two kinds. The foundational gifts are wisdom, understanding, counsel, piety, fortitude, knowledge and fear of God. These seven spiritual gifts are given to all the baptized through the Sacrament of Baptism. These gifts are cited in the book of the

prophet Isaiah 11: 2-3. These seven gifts are mostly personal gifts which are destined for the sanctification of the person who possesses them.

Besides these personal gifts, we have the external manifestations of the Holy Spirits we call charismas. Charismas are rooted in the seven gifts received through the Sacrament of baptism. Charismas as external manifestations of the Holy Spirit are extraordinary favors given by the Holy Spirit in order to help other people or the Church.

St Paul talks about these charismas in Ephesians 4: 11-14: “He gave some as apostles, others as prophets, others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers, to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry, for building the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the extent of the full stature of Christ, so that we may no longer be infants, tossed by waves and swept along by every wind of teaching arising from human trickery...”

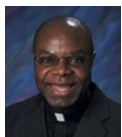
To these words, St Paul adds some more in 1 Corinthians 12. The whole chapter 12 is about charismas. The verse 7 says, “To each individual the manifestations of the Spirit are given for some benefit”. If that is true, then, it means that we complete each other by the gifts we have. Therefore, we cannot despise those who are not like us or who are less gifted than we are. On the contrary, we have to learn to appreciate each other because it is of the will of God that we are who we are and possess what we have.

Moreover, there is no doubt that we are different from one another, as well as we come from different backgrounds. Because of those differences, our ways of being, acting and living are also different. And yet, in Jesus Christ, we are called to become the one people of God, the community of the believers, sharing in the same faith and living the same commitments before God and his Church as we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Therefore, we have to be careful for the way we present ourselves to others or treat them. Our individualities or particularities should not become an obstacle to forming the one people of God. Of course, there is no denial of individual riches and particularity; what is at stake is the fact that in order to become a people of God, we need to hold to what unites us rather than what divides us. That is why it is important to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking within us because after all, he aims at uniting people rather than dividing them.

In a few minutes, you will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Remember that what makes the charismas effective in our lives is our cooperation to the grace God gives us by living in a godly manner. Let us be attentive to the motions of the Holy Spirit within us. May the Holy Spirit help us build a strong community in which we are all witnesses of the risen Lord! May the Holy Spirit help us through the celebration of the Pentecost recognize our gifts and our sins so that we are forgiven by the Lord! May God bless you all!

Acts 2: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-7, 12-13; John 20: 19-23



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