

Message for the Solemnity of Pentecost

This Sunday we celebrate the solemnity of Pentecost, typically referred to as the birthday of the Church. The apostles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and immediately begin their public ministry that brings the good news of the gospel to every corner of the earth. They continue the ministry of Jesus as the Body of Christ, the Church.

Pentecost was a Jewish feast, one of the three major feasts for the people of Israel. The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost was seven weeks after Passover. On Passover the people celebrated their freedom from slavery in Egypt. On Pentecost they celebrated the wheat harvest and the gift of the Torah on Mount Sinai. The gift of the Torah in a real sense made the people of Israel a nation committed to serving God, His Chosen People.

We can thus see in these ancient Israel feasts foreshadowing of the greater gifts, the greater feasts, brought through the ministry of Jesus. At Passover Jesus became the lamb of sacrifice and through the Paschal Mystery ended our slavery to sin and death. When Jesus and God the Father sent the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles the Church, the new people of God are formed. And the Word of God is no longer external, but part of who we are as temples of the Holy Spirit.

50 days ago we celebrated Easter. We celebrated the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus for our salvation. It was an event that transformed the world in its day and continues to transform the world every day. We celebrated what Jesus did 2000 years ago and celebrated what Jesus was achieving in us that very day. Everyday our Lord is present. Everyday He is offering His grace. Everyday His abundant love is available to renew us in His image, in His divine life, that we can be the best version of ourselves in Him.

Today as we celebrate the power of the Holy Spirit working in the early Church, we are also to reflect on the power of the Holy Spirit to transform our individual lives.

This feast has special readings for the Vigil Mass, much like the Easter Vigil did. We hear in Genesis about the multiplication of languages that come upon the people to confuse their speech because of their sinfulness. This confusion is not so much a punishment as it is a protection to impede the people from doing even worse things against God. But the rest of the readings provide hope for a better day.

In Exodus, after bringing the people of Israel out of slavery, God promises that they will be His special possession. They are called into a covenant relationship with God and given the opportunity to be “a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” The people repeatedly forego this covenant relationship, but through the prophets God is always calling them back. In Ezekiel God promises the gift of the spirit that will literally bring dry bones to life. And then the prophet Joel speaks of the renewal that will come to the people through the spirit. The people will prophesy, miracles will be worked, and the people rescued from the darkness will live in hope.

Sunday’s readings then speak to the reality of this renewal in the Holy Spirit. Acts of the Apostles speaks of the power of the Spirit in images of a strong wind and fire. The gift of tongues allows the various languages of the world to no longer be a barrier. Everyone can

understand God's language of love. Everyone that receives the Spirit will hear the voice of God speaking directly to their heart.

And the gift of the Spirit brings new life. Jesus' ministry is continued through the Church. In a particular way it will be continued by the apostles and their successors that will teach with authority, heal in the name of Jesus, offer His gift of mercy and forgiveness, and unite all in the life and very Body of Christ in the Eucharist.

But even more, each member of the faithful becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit that will be given gifts to share for the good of the entire Body of Christ and for the good of the world. And today each person is to be open to that wisdom and power of the holy Spirit working in and through them. We are reminded to be far less concerned about the gifts we have not received but for which we long, and rather, immerse ourselves in the wonder of the gifts we have received and all the ways we can grow in Christ by placing them into action.

May we then rejoice in the gift of the Spirit. May we rejoice in the invitation and reality of being part of the Body of Christ the Church. And may we allow the Spirit to lead us daily into all the joy, hope and promise that is possible when we declare that "Jesus is Lord"!

Blessings to you all!

Fr. Robert

Re-opening Coming Soon

This weekend's bulletin has information regarding the parish's planning for resuming the celebration of Mass. While we are still awaiting an official date, we are hoping for some tie in mid-June. As we reopen the parish will need to follow guidelines from the Diocese as well as state and local governments. If you do not already receive the bulletin via Flocknote, please go to our website olphclovis.org to read the bulletin.

Confessions Next Saturday, June 6th

As we look to reopen, we will be trying new formats and figuring out what works well. Next Saturday, June 6th we will offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 8:00 – 9:30 AM. Fr. Robert and Fr. Chika will be available in Our Lady's Rosary Plaza for confessions BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Beginning next Monday parishioners can call the office to schedule an appointment time. Appointments will be scheduled every 5 minutes. Penitents should wait in their cars until the priest is ready for them. Please be aware of the following:

- The sacrament of reconciliation is never a time for pastoral counselling. This is especially true as we try to work through a backlog of faithful wanting to receive the sacrament.
- Penitents should come prepared to list their sins in a clear but concise manner.

- Since March 13th, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been dispensed by Bishop Brennan. While we are obligated to keep the Lord's Day holy, no one should be confessing missing Mass between March 13th to the present.

Chapel Open for Limited Visits

Feel free to make a short visit to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The chapel is open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am – 7:00 pm. To help in providing a safe environment that is available to all, please adhere to the following rules:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and after visiting the chapel
- Maintain a minimum 6 feet social distance from non-family members
- Please keep visits short to allow everyone an opportunity to spend time with our Lord
- Please avoid touching furniture or any objects unless absolutely necessary
- Wearing of face masks is highly recommended

Send in Your Intercessions

All are invited to send your particular petitions on a card or slip of paper and we will place them at the foot of the altar to be joined with the sacrifice of the Mass.