**Pentecost Sunday, Cycle B**

Acts 2:1-11; 1Cor 12:3b-7; John 20:19-23

May 19/20, 2018

There are many languages and cultures in our world, many ways of expressing ourselves. There are many people, all unique and irreplaceable. There are many roads on which we can travel, many things we can choose to do, many vocations to which we may be called. This is all very good and pleasing to God.

But we also know that there are many wounds and divisions and sins in the world. There are even divisions in the Church. There is misunderstanding and confusion as to what is true and what is good. People are walking away from the Church and the practice of their faith. This is of great concern and displeasing to God.

On Pentecost, we are reminded that we need not remain divided. We can, rather, rejoice in the goodness of our diversity and embrace our “Catholicism” our universality and diversity as a Church. And we can overcome our sinful divisions because the Father sends us the Holy Spirit to strengthen, unite, and encourage us all.

There is only one faith, one truth for which we all long. There is one Church, the Body of Christ, and the People of God. There is only one Lord, one God. There is only one Holy Spirit who has been poured into our lives bringing forgiveness and peace to our world. In the midst of all the goodness of diversity, and all the evils of division and sin, there is one source of unity – the Holy Spirit, the bond of love who is God. He unites us. He forgives us and heals us. He conquers our fears, dispels our doubts and rejoices in our diversity as a Church.

The Holy Spirit is given to us and he brings unity and clarity and peace and courage. He teaches us the fullness of truth. He lives within us. He has been poured into our lives. We can recognize him through his goodness. He fills us with his strength. The stronger our faith, the more we see him at work. The more we believe, the more capable we are to receive him in his fullness. He ultimately conquers our fears and heals our divisions and brings joy to our lives.

The Holy Spirit is superior to any of our differences. He bridges all divisions. He transforms us into the one Body of Christ. Just as flour alone cannot become a loaf of bread without water, so too we cannot become one Body without the Holy Spirit entering our lives. Just as a field cannot yield a harvest without rain, so too we cannot bear good fruit without the Holy Spirit raining down on us from above. Just as we cannot recover from a serious illness without the proper medicine, so too we cannot rid ourselves of sin and division without the power of the Holy Spirit within us.

Yes, we are diverse and unique in God’s eyes. There is goodness in our diversity. Yet we are one Body. We have one Spirit. We are one Church from which we must never separate ourselves. The unity and reconciliation which the Holy Spirit gives us is superior to any divisions among us. We must not deny w hat is most important, our unity, by fighting over our differences. Do we consider this when we are tempted to get into arguments among ourselves? Do we think of this when we are f aced with the choice to forgive or to condemn? To the woman caught in adultery, Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go in peace, but sin no more!” Jesus condemned the sin but not the sinner who asked for mercy. Will we do the same?

Yes we will if we accept the meaning of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured into the Church and continues to be poured into our lives through the sacraments. He is the one who unites us in our diversity, heals our divisions, and conquers our fears.

God wills us to be one. He forgives our sins and divisions and rejoices in our diversity. He has sent his Holy Spirit to accomplish this.

Jesus said in today’s Gospel, “Peace be with you.” He says over and over again, “Peace be with you! As I have given you peace, now go and give it to others.”

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful ones and enkindle in them the fire of your love, and renew the face of the earth.Holy Ho*