

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ!

In our first reading this morning, we heard how the Holy Spirit came to Jesus' disciples on Pentecost. Suddenly this confused, fearful group of disciples became evangelists. It's as though what happened at the Tower of Babel was suddenly reversed in an amazing scene. Remember how at Babel, people were divided suddenly speaking many languages. Now former fishermen and other disciples of Jesus are speaking multiple languages as though they have done so their entire lives. Devout Jews from Elam, Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus, Pamphylia and elsewhere now hear what God has done through Jesus each in their own native tongue.

God's deeds of power are spoken about with in crystal clear fashion leaving those who heard it convicted and before the day is done, 3,000 will be baptized becoming followers of Jesus. On Pentecost a diverse group of people were brought forth with an understanding of what this good news meant for them.

The coming of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise in our gospel text this morning, remember Jesus saying "This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."

I suppose that in some fashion our experience of the Holy Spirit is like wearing glasses. The only time I really look at my glasses is when I'm looking for my glasses. They aren't made to be seen so much as to see through. For me anyway, they function best when I don't notice them, I examine them to remove smudges and fingerprints, but when they are comfortably on my ears and nose, I'm not all that aware of them. My glasses do their best work when they enable me to see my book, my computer screen, or the movie I'm watching. I don't see my glasses when I've got them on, but when I wear them, I certainly see!

And we become aware of the power of the Holy Spirit when it's time to stand up and speak up for Jesus. There are times when you may be rebuked or scorned, made fun of, for your faith. Then remember what Jesus said in the Beatitudes "Blessed are you if you are reviled and persecuted and suffer evil falsehoods on account of me. Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven." (Matthew 5:11-12))

The time is now brothers and sisters for us to speak the words of Jesus, love God, love neighbor as yourself, love one another as Jesus has loved you, as you do unto the least of these Jesus' brothers and sisters you have done unto Jesus. We must stand against injustice and speak up for justice. We must love God, love mercy, walk humbly beside our God. The time is now to speak up, so remember the Holy Spirit will guide us in truth. because as the Apostle Paul says in our second reading "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit

of slavery to fall back into fear.” My dear friends, you will never hear me spouting a political line from this pulpit, but you will hear me speaking a moral, social, and or spiritual agenda from this pulpit because that is what I am called to do. The time is here for us to move with the power given us in our baptisms, standing firmly for justice, for equality, for dignity and fairness for all people.

Give up the game of trying to possess your soul by how much you can possess outside it. Give up conforming to the world by loving things and using people, instead love people and use things. Accept the gospel truth that you are never more in possession of yourself than when you lose yourself in others.

This day is a time to remember that God’s Spirit is present in a mighty way. This is why our worship is the way it is: liturgy, prayers, readings, the sermon, Holy Communion, our offering and hymns. Holy Communion isn’t just bread and wine, baptism isn’t just water and a formula, and we cannot limit who is in and who is outside the reach of God, anymore than the Israelites could in the time of our readings.

Because when we encounter the presence of God, we realize we cannot limit who God is and how God acts, no matter how we might try. We who bear Christ’s name are called to share our love of God as much as the disciples were called to share God’s love. We are to share the love of God freely, and share the gospel in our deeds and our words with everyone. We are empowered by nothing less than the power and presence of our God.

AMEN