

Sunday June 5, 2022

Pentecost Sunday: The Birth of The Church

Parishioner Reflection

By: Dan Perron

Once in a while, I have gotten the following question from a student: “Why is it that when the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles in the early Church they spoke in different languages, worked many miracles and the faith spread everywhere like wildfire? Nothing like that happens anymore, why?” Usually, my response is that the early Church needed these works that imitated Jesus’ own works to help it grow and to bear witness to the coming of God’s kingdom. Often, my own heart would say, do we not need the same gifts of the Spirit today in a world that has become so neo-Christian and in some areas pagan? Indeed, as a schoolteacher, I could probably put forward a convincing argument that our current Catholic students are probably the most unchurched group I have ever taught, so where is God’s spirit today? But on the contrary, our students do more to help those in need in our community, are more conscious of bullying and the importance of kindness and are more aware of the needs of others than any group I have ever taught.

Furthermore, there are as many miracles today as ever... the lives of the saints bear witness to the presence of the Spirit everywhere in the world. There were more saints canonized in the last century than in any of the preceding centuries. The hidden tongues of fire have called forth the work of the Spirit from the four corners of the earth as the saints do and have done their work of serving and helping, loving and healing: the poor, the down-trodden, the hopeless, the heart-broken—all those in need of God’s redeeming love. The Spirit is alive and at work if we have the eyes to see. The Apostles were sent forth by our Lord with the following command: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:21) He gave the Apostles the authority to forgive sin. (John 20:22) He also promised that: “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.”

Sin and injustice have always been part of society; part of the human heart since the fall and the Church, the community founded by Christ through His apostles continues its mission of healing through the forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of reconciliation and the anointing of the sick. It, too, continues to guide humanity by witnessing to the truth of the Gospels through the preaching and teaching of her ministers and the successors of the Apostles, our bishops and the priests who are their representatives in our parishes. The

Church is as alive and active today as it was when the Holy Spirit divinized and inspired the early believers to go out to the world and proclaim, “the good news of salvation to all peoples.”

The faith handed down to us through the Scriptures, our Traditions and the constant teachings of the Magisterium has been guided by the work of the Spirit through the ages. Our modern call is to “Evangelization,” this means that, with the gifts of the Spirit given to us at Confirmation, we must go out into our workplaces, communities, and neighbourhoods, unto our families, friends and neighbours, and proclaim the Gospel through our words and deeds.

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
— St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)

Come Holy Spirit! We need Your inspiration, strength and power to assist us in all our works as we commit ourselves to living out the Gospel wherever we are!