

Door to the Divine Pentecost Sunday May 20, 2018 10:00 AM Acts 2:1-11;
1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; Jn 14:15-16, 23b-26 (God's plan for the human race is grand and
great to the infinite. Jesus embodied this grand vision and lived it out in a life of cooperation and
service to others.)

Today we celebrate the great feast of **Pentecost, the great gift of the Holy Spirit**. When I was in eighth grade, I remember Sister Eudelma saying, "The Holy Spirit is the forgotten person of the Holy Trinity." At the time I thought that was a rather odd thing to say, but in time I realized how right she was, and for a good reason. If we talk about God the Father, we have a pretty good idea what a father is or should be. If we talk about God incarnate in Christ, in Jesus, who is human, we have something to relate to; he is human like us. But **Spirit, what does that even mean? Well actually it means "air."** Now we need air or we couldn't be here right now, but have you thought about air all day? We just take it for granted. We are in the air. We breathe the air, and **it's just something we take for granted**, unless something goes terribly wrong with our lungs. So the **Spirit is that, the God who is within us and around us, upon whom we totally depend, but which is for the most part invisible and unobtrusive and we can completely ignore**, the Holy Spirit. And when I was really young we called him the "Holy Ghost," even more strange.

Now **Jesus said the Spirit will be our companion and teach us all things**. There are two main tasks the Spirit has in our lives. First of all **it's waking us up**. The experience of Pentecost was for the apostles a wakeup. They had lived with Jesus for many years. They had been very used to him. They were very dependent upon him. Before he rose away from their sight he said, "It is better for you if I go because if I don't, the Spirit will not come." He didn't mean the Spirit wasn't already there; of course **the Spirit is always there, here, everywhere**. But he meant that **unless they became emptied out and consciously needy and expectant, they wouldn't be open to an in-filling of the Holy Spirit**, which they did experience and which energized them way beyond ordinary human capacities. The story of their energy at work is called **the Acts of the Apostles. It is the history of the very beginning of the Church**, and it enabled the apostles to work with God in a very intimate way. But the point of the whole book is that **this is supposed to continue onward**.

Now if waking up is important for us to be fully alive, for us to recognize the higher dimensions of our human nature and the creation of God, **there is something else very important: growing up**. Growing up is not to be taken for granted, like breathing. We do grow physically in a normal way, but not necessarily any other way. My sister is always complaining about the people she works with that she says act like, well, four-year-olds or maybe eight-year-olds, but anyway not like mature adults. Why is this? We can't go into that, but the fact is **spiritual maturation is a work we actually have to do**. The Spirit helps us, but we actually have to grow **willingly and voluntarily**. **St. Paul urges us to put on the mind of Christ**. This is not something we will ever accomplish completely while we are on this planet. There's no one so mature that he or she cannot grow further, Mother Teresa included, Pope Francis included, everyone included. **We all can grow higher, fuller into the mind of Christ**. Paul also speaks of **the body of Christ, the Church coming to full stature**. This also will not happen as long as we are around, in the next few years, hundred years, no. It won't come to full

stature in a hundred years, probably not in a thousand years. But we all can advance a little bit, move a little bit in the right direction toward fuller life, better life.

The Spirit actually teaches us to be human as Jesus was human, to follow God's lead in the development of our human lives in the image of Christ. In fact the original idea of the Church was a **vanguard of spiritually attuned people** who would form the basis of a whole new social way of life, and they did. The Church has influenced the world for the better over many centuries, mostly at the beginning before politics intervened to sap the energies of the Church. Nonetheless, the Church did accomplish raising up the whole idea of human worth and dignity. **Although we have come a long way, we have much further to go.** The Spirit in this process is opposed to all forms of smallness. **Smallness divides and creates divisions and all kinds of injustices.** The privileges of some become more important than the rights of all, for example.

But **God's plan for the human race is grand and great to the infinite**, no smallness there. Jesus embodied this grand vision and lived it out in a life of cooperation and service to others, which he taught was, is **the door to the divine.** He taught his disciples to do as he did, to wash others' feet, for example. St. Benedict put this very well to his monks. He said, "*Ora et Labora,*" pray and work. This is an essentially Christian attitude, Buddhists don't have it. They don't have a sense of work; they have a sense of *ora*, yes, pray, but **Benedict said pray and work. Seek the will of God and then do the will of God.**

Now God's will for everyone begins with basic responsibilities to our own families. But Jesus was always encouraging his followers to go beyond their normal boundaries, to **let their concerns overflow into the wider community.** There are **in our parish many opportunities for service to the wider community.** We do not offer them because we think you have too much time on your hands. We know you don't, but we offer them **so that you may gain the benefits and the blessings that come from being a partner of the Holy Spirit in the work of God in advancing God's plan on earth.** Now after Mass in the library there are these yellow sheets and I urge you to take one and look at it. On two sides it has all the ministries and services that you can or anyone can participate in. And if you have other ideas, there's a blank spot you can write them in. So that is an opportunity that Pentecost has afforded us.