

Wake Up and Grow Up Mass of Anticipation for Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018
Wednesday, May 16, 2018 8:15 AM ASCA Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13;
Jn 20:19-23 (Honoring First Holy Communicants) (God's plan—is that we grow into a love
which is really everybody, for the whole of humanity. And it can only come from the Holy Spirit.)

Well good morning everyone. Today we are celebrating the great gift of the Spirit. **The Spirit is God**, but not God in the flesh like Jesus. **The Spirit is given to us**, and we understand the Spirit as coming down, although that's just an expression, but it's a good one. The point and the purpose of the Spirit coming down is **to help us rise up in two ways**—two ways we go up: **wake up and grow up**. Those are two things we have to do on earth. We are put here. We are created in the image of God. We are baptized into the body of Christ, but we still have work to do. We have to wake up, and we have to grow up.

Now you might think you are already awake. Well you are to a point. **The apostles** thought they were awake on the morning of Pentecost, but when the Spirit came, they realized that they hadn't been fully awake. They **experienced a kind of new wakefulness and what we call inspiration**. They were suddenly inspired, filled with a new kind of alertness, awareness, and that was the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came to them **to empower them to go out into the world and really raise up the whole world in a new level of awareness of God**. In a way the Church, that's us, in a way **we are a guinea pig**. God is experimenting with us saying, "Well I'll try this, see if it works, and then let it grow and develop throughout the whole world." Or you might say the Church is the vanguard, if you want to think of that. What's a vanguard? The vanguard is the first guard in a war, the first troops, the first line. **We are the vanguard**, if you want to think this way, **in God's great plan to bring about better life, richer life, newer life, fuller life for all of humanity. But we all have to wake up for that to take place**.

Now as I said, you think you are already awake, but we tend not to be awake. We can daydream a lot of our life away. Or, which is the same thing, we can entertain ourselves. When we are entertaining ourselves, we are really not awake. So this is not about entertaining ourselves. It's not about fun. It's not about pleasure or leisure. It's about something quite different. It's about being really alive—**really being alive, feeling life in a very profound and powerful way. That's waking up**.

Second, growing up. Now you might think, well of course, I'm going to grow up; everyone grows up. No, we all grow up physically, but **there are a lot of people who never grow up inwardly**. There are adults in this world who have the mind of a two-year-old, really—"mind" in the sense of their way of taking things. Two-year-olds are very **concerned about themselves**; they have to be. You can't get beyond two years old without being really concerned about yourself. But eventually we have to become concerned about more than myself. So then some people get concerned about, well okay, **I'll have one or two other people I'll be concerned about: maybe my family or maybe my country**.

But God's plan—**God's plan—is that we grow into a love which is really everybody**. Now nobody is there yet the way Christ was, but that's where we are going: a love for everybody, **for the whole of humanity. And it can only come from the Holy Spirit**. We on our own human

nature won't have that, except we are made in the image of God so we have the potential. But the potential is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit, who helps us grow up.

Now how do we get there? **How do we really grow up?** Well there are lots of ways, but one way I want to talk about today is through the Eucharist. Actually **the Eucharist is the best means God has given us to help us grow up into a real universal love for all people.** It contains within it the power of Jesus' own death and resurrection. So when we come to Eucharist, first of all, we are supposed to listen—**listen—to the word of God.** Now I hope you don't only listen to the word of God when you are at Mass. I hope you are listening at least once or twice a day; **put aside some time to listen to the word of God. Prayer is the most important thing if we are going to grow up.** But prayer involves listening, not just talking. It's good to talk. It's good to share your heart with God, but you also have to listen to God's heart. And he is not going to speak English or Spanish or whatever normal language you use. He is going to speak though to your heart. But you have to listen. So that's the first thing. We have to listen to God.

Then we have to respond to God. Well, what is the Eucharist about? It's about giving ourselves to God as he gave himself for us, joining together, joining together our problems, sufferings, worries, anxieties, joys, fears, everything, all that's going on inside of us, offering it to God, bring it in union with Jesus, who suffered a great deal on the cross, who experienced more turmoil than we ever could put into a life. We join that in the Mass to Christ, and he takes it to the Father, so that **we now are offering ourselves to the Father along with Christ.** And then we come to the meal where God feeds us. And this should give us great consolation if we **consciously receive the body of Christ and say with faith, "Amen."** And we take the cup of salvation and we say with true feeling and faith, "Amen," and we receive it. That should give us a great sense of consolation. **And indeed one of the principal fruits of the Mass is contemplation, a sense of inner peace, a sense of inner unity.**

Now you second graders have just recently received your First Holy Communion, and I'm sure that day was very special for you, and I'm sure today is very special. But what I want to urge you to do is to **try to make every reception of Communion special,** and you can do that. How? **Focus, pay attention, be present to Christ as he is present to you.**