

Pentecost Sunday – May 31, 2009

Acts 2: 1-11; Ps 104; 1 Co. 12:3b-7, 12-13; Lk 20:19-23

Homily

By: S. Mary Paul Mehegan, OP

The liturgy for Pentecost Sunday has always held a special place in my heart, beginning with that fascinating list of people Luke describes in the Acts of the Apostles. Those Partians, Medes and Alamites—and the list goes on and on—who listened to the Apostles' preaching that day! Our favorite parish priest used to recite those strange names so easily, and, as our teachers had let us know, this was the “birthday” of the Church! We thought it truly amazing that such a diverse crowd heard about the mighty acts of God each in his own tongue!

Somehow the thrill of being a member of a church that includes the whole world in its embrace and the fact that the Spirit of God is filling that world with the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection have always captured my imagination and delighted my soul. The mighty wind, the tongues of fire, the unity of language amid diversity of that first Pentecost Sunday speak a powerful message of God's universal love for humankind on that occasion and is still made available to us today.

In today's gospel account of Jesus' visit to his Apostles on Easter Sunday evening, we are reminded that the peace He offered his friends will continue to be offered to anyone who seeks it. By breathing on them the gift of the Spirit, Jesus sent them forth in peace—a peace closely related to forgiveness, his forgiveness of sin but also the wider invitation to each of his followers to develop loving relationships with all those who will share the world with them.

Today—in 2009--we find ourselves increasingly made aware of “globalization” and the challenges we face to overcome our fears of diversity and our prejudices and to assume our responsibility for positive action to preserve the beauty and richness of our environment so that all the peoples with whom we share our planet will be the beneficiaries. We can no longer isolate ourselves from our brothers and sisters near and far. As members of the one Body of Christ, we must continue to work with the Spirit in the renewal of our earth.

May these familiar words of the psalmist continue to inspire us on this Pentecost Sunday as we invoke the healing, unifying and enlivening presence of God the Holy Spirit for each of us individuals, family members and our entire world so torn by suffering, divisions, ignorance and war:

Send forth thy Spirit and we shall be created—and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth!