

Feast of Pentecost

May 31, 2009

We Catholics get Christmas, right? Easter Sunday filled the Ventura Building (for the last time). But Pentecost? Pentecost feels like a regular Sunday. If you're wearing red, probably you're a Reds fan.

The red is from the tongues of flame that seemed to appear over the heads of the believers on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given to them. People in trances see various colors, and the color red tells us the disciples were in a deep trance when the Spirit was given.

"Oh, that's interesting. And where is this 'Holy Spirit' that you speak of?"

The fish asks, "Where is the water?" The bird wonders, "Where is the air today?" The baseball hit high in the air asks, "Am I in the gravity now?" In the same way, you ask where is God's Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God's presence everywhere in creation, in every place, in every creature--even in God's enemies. The Spirit is God's love and mercy beyond the Church, beyond the sacraments, beyond the bible. The Holy Spirit is in Islamic mosques, in Hindu and Jewish temples, in the Vineyard and Crossroads Community Church, and in the kitchens of non-practicing Catholics. You see, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit, and every breath that every creature takes is to breathe in God's merciful Spirit. We Christians, we Catholics are simply aware of that divine presence.

“Never thought of God that way. So, what does the Holy Spirit do all day?” Well, life without the Spirit is like the evening local news: robberies, shootings, stealing, revenge, drugs, drunken driving. St. Paul throws in jealousy, selfishness, men using women, even dissensions. Some of it’s Clermont County Jail stuff, some of it’s just sin. St. Paul calls it the flesh. The “flesh” is the part of us that we haven’t given over to God’s light and grace. (The United States has 5% of the world’s people, and 25% of the world’s prisoners. Are we really going to arrest our way out of the “flesh?”)

Anyway, the fruit of the Spirit sounds a lot better: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, self-control. That’s what the Holy Spirit will do in us, and that’s why the Feast of Pentecost ought to be a major church feast!

“Awesome. One more question. How do I grab onto God’s Spirit?” You don’t grab on to God. God grabs on to you! Here’s how to get the Spirit: drive north on I-275, get in the right lane, and just before the Rt. 50 Hillsboro exit, look down into the valley. And you’ll see that big wind turbine. *Pray like a wind turbine!* Sit still, wait quietly, be aware of your breath--and wait for God’s wind to blow you. That wind turbine doesn’t run away; it doesn’t give up in calm weather. It waits until God breathes on it. Then it begins to turn and lights up the world.

Sometime today, let’s all go outside and take a deep breath. We won’t be far from God!

