Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



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"I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always" (John 14:16).

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Ps 66; 1 Pt 3:15-18; Jn 14:15-21

With this Sixth Sunday of Easter, we sense the shape of this long 50-day Easter season as guiding us to the Ascension and then Pentecost. The Jesus of history who lived and died in the first century passes his identity and ministry to the early church. With his departure, they, and now we, become his active presence in the world.

We also mark Mother’s Day, the perfect image for Pentecost, the birth of the disciples as the church. How challenging is it that Jesus tells an all-male hierarchy today that the church begins like a woman enduring the birth process? The disciples will know the anguish of a pregnant woman carrying her unborn child, then delivering this new life with triumphant joy. They will themselves be reborn into the mystery of the risen Christ, new creations tasked with sharing their joy with the world.

It must have been a profound transformation for the first generation of believers, filled with anxiety and a sense of inadequacy. How can they take up the mission of their Lord? Yet, it is in this dark interval that their faith takes form. Their emptiness receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

While the newly baptized are catechized, we are all invited to renew our lives with the radiating love described by John's Gospel. The Father’s love for Jesus is poured into the disciples, who are sent to share it with the world. They are now members of the body of Christ and temples of his Holy Spirit, little churches that reveal the indwelling of the Trinity: God is Creator, Mediator and Sanctifier, invisible in history but now revealed in us.

This reality remains hidden until we embody and live it. We are invited to immerse ourselves in the mystery of divine life, amplifying our natural gifts in all our relationships. Everything we say and do has a fruitfulness that permeates our faith communities and wider society. Where there is darkness, let there be light; where there is division, unity; where there is fear, hope and compassion.

We see this power in the deacon Philip’s ministry in Samaria. He preaches Jesus, then heals the sick and drives out unclean spirits. Yet, these believers are still incomplete because they have been baptized but had not received the Holy Spirit. When the Apostles Peter and John come from Jerusalem, they lay hands on them, and they receive the Holy Spirit. They now share the rebirth of Pentecost.

Today’s Gospel repeats the now familiar love song Jesus left in the hearts of his disciples before his departure. This inner melody is the life of the Trinity, the hum of creation we all know intuitively that rose like a symphony in the disciples at Pentecost. It is the basic harmony underlying the Beloved Community we will enjoy at the end of time.

The Gospels are the libretto for this mystery in us. We listen to its words and find the invitation to step to its rhythm and beauty. This is our mission to the world. As we anticipate the feast of Pentecost, Jesus says to us:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth … You know the Spirit, who remains with you, and will be in you.