

HOMILY PENTECOST

May 31, 2020

Once upon a time there was an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years. And one day his horse ran away. Upon hearing that news, his neighbors came to visit him and they said, “Oh, such bad luck.” They were really sympathetic. The old farmer said, “maybe.” A couple of days later, the horse returns bringing three wild horses. “How wonderful” the neighbors exclaimed.” The farmer said, “maybe.” A couple of days later the farmer’s son tried to ride one of the untamed horses. He was thrown to the ground and broke his leg. The neighbors again came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune. The farmer said, “maybe.” A couple of days later military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Upon seeing that the son’s leg was broken they passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things turned out. The farmer said, “maybe.” The truth is, there is a great deal of uncertainty in our lives. Things happen all of the time that we have no control over and we do not always know when things first happen how they will turn out.

Deacon Don gave me a book recently and the title of the book is, *Where the Hell is God?* In the midst of this pandemic many of us are probably asking ourselves this same question. God is bigger than we can wrap our minds around, but there are some things that we do know. God created a world that is less than perfect where there is suffering, disease and pain, otherwise this would be heaven and we are not there yet. God does not directly send the suffering, disease and pain. God does not punish us. God does not send us accidents to teach us lessons, but we can learn from them. God does not will earthquakes, floods, pandemics and natural disasters. We sometimes blame God for accidents and natural disasters, but he did not cause them. We are usually the ones who cause accidents. We are learning more and more that natural disasters are sometimes caused because of the way we have abused our environment. We do know that the Holy Spirit is here with us always acting as our advocate, walking this journey with us.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, the day 2,000 years ago when the disciples received the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised to send. The actions of the Holy Spirit are rather illusive. In the reading today from Acts of the Apostles the Holy Spirit is described as a noise like a driving wind and appeared like tongues of fire. This was the Jewish feast of Pentecost, which was a pilgrimage feast. If possible, Jews were to celebrate in Jerusalem. So there were people from all over the world there speaking many different languages. And everyone heard them speaking in their own language. How did this happen? Were they speaking some kind of spiritual language of the heart that they all understood? Did the Holy Spirit act as a great translator so that their ears heard in their own language? Did the people suddenly learn all of the languages of the world so that they understood all languages as if it were their native tongue? I cannot wrap my mind around all of that. We do not know how that happened; we just know that it happened through the power of the Holy Spirit. But we would like to have a logical explanation

The truth is, our lives are very uncertain, but we are uncomfortable with uncertainty. We want to build a certain life, but that is not possible. Maybe that is one of the things we need to learn from the pandemic. We may need to learn that our lives are uncertain and that we just need to get more comfortable with the uncertainty. In the midst of this pandemic, we would like to create a certain future, and we do need to make some plans for how we are going to open things up in as safe a way as possible but there are all kinds of things to consider. We are totally focused upon the coronavirus right now, but it is not the only consideration. We have all kinds of spiritual, emotional, physical and material needs. The truth is our future is very uncertain. We all need to make the best decisions we can every day and then it will all unfold. And the Holy Spirit is right here with us on the journey and acting in ways that we are not aware of and in ways that we will probably never totally understand. Things are going to be ok. And when we look for certainty in our future, I think the farmer has the right attitude. When faced with statements of certainty in the future, we should say “maybe.” Let’s see what the Holy Spirit has in store.