

HOMILY ~ PENTECOST

JUNE 4/5, 2022

If you have been to Italy, you are probably familiar with the baroque sculptor, Bernini. He is very prolific. His statues are all over. What you may not know is that he sometimes started the sculpture and then gave it to one of his students to finish. Bernini had the vision of what the sculpture would look like when it was finished. He shared the vision with his students, and the students would have learned enough about his technique that they would be able to complete the sculpture. Art historians speculate about which sculptures were completed by Bernini and which were completed by students. Sometimes it is hard to tell. God is kind of like Bernini, and we are like his students. God created each of us in his own image; he got us started, but we are not complete. It is up to each of us to complete ourselves, and this will take a whole lifetime. If we are able to become the person that God created us to be, we will have fulfilling and joyful lives.

In the First Reading today, we hear about that first Pentecost 2,000 years ago. We remember how the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples. The Holy Spirit is described as a driving wind or tongues of fire. Wind and fire are rather transient and changing. We do not know where the wind comes from or where it goes, but we can feel its effects. The Holy Spirit is rather illusive when compared with the Father and with Jesus. We can relate to the Father as a loving parent. We can relate to Jesus as a sibling or a best friend. The Holy Spirit is rather illusive, but we can feel the effects of the Holy Spirit on our lives. The people 2,000 years ago were astounded because they spoke many different languages, but they were able to understand one another. I think this is because all of the people there were filled with the same Holy Spirit. Maybe this communication was more on a spiritual level.

I can feel the Holy Spirit here every time we gather for Mass. There is a peace here and a connection that I do not feel when I go to other gatherings. We are all filled with the same Holy Spirit, and our faith helps us to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I partially feel this connection because I know many of you; but there are many people here that I have never had a conversation with, yet I still feel the connection. Do you feel it? That is the Holy Spirit. Rather illusive, don't you think?

The Holy Spirit is rather illusive, but he will guide us to become the person that God intended us to be from the moment he created us. He created us in his own image, but we are not complete. We have to complete his creation. We can be guided by the Holy Spirit, but we have to be open to his work in our lives.

I look at being open to the Holy Spirit as a type of mindset. Mindset is defined as the established set of attitudes held by someone. Our mindset is pretty consistent, but we can change it intentionally. Your mindset is important because it influences how you look at life. If you believe that the Holy Spirit is with you and guiding you in life, you tend to think that everything is resolvable. When life is hard, we believe that change is impossible. We can change our thoughts, our circumstances and our experiences. Even if we do not know how things will be resolved at the time, we know that we are not in this alone and the Holy Spirit will help us. This is rather illusive, you will not necessarily be praying for exactly what you want, but you can have the peace that comes from knowing things will be ok. It does not mean that life is free of all stress and anxiety. Sometimes I am stressed by circumstances in the Parish that I need to resolve, but I have never felt overwhelmed. As the Pastor, I am always the one who has to make the final decision; I always listen to my staff and parishioners, and I know the Holy Spirit will guide me.

If you do not have faith that the Holy Spirit is guiding you in life, your mindset will be very different. You may frequently feel overwhelmed because you have to figure out everything on your own. You will probably think of yourself as more of a victim and believe that you cannot change your thoughts, your circumstances or your experiences. Your life may feel like things are totally out of your control and are just happening to you. You do not know if things will work out or how, which makes you feel powerless and overwhelmed. That leads you to want to keep things exactly the same so that you have some sense of security.

I am going to give you some homework today. Take a look at your mindset. Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding you, and things will be resolved, and we can change our lives for the better with his help? Or do you feel that you have to figure everything out alone? Pray about your mindset. You can change it if it is not what you would like it to be.

Love & Peace,

Fr. Jim