

**May 24, 2015**

**Feast of Pentecost**

**The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord**

*Pentecost reveals to us the truth of who we are before God, that we are exactly what God had in mind when God made us. When we inhabit that truth, we become that truth, and nothing is ever the same again.*

Pentecost means 50 days from Easter, and is often described as tongues of fire firing hearts of disciples. The feast itself dates back to the first century. The color of the vestments is red, symbolic of the love of the Holy Spirit or of the tongues of fire. In Italy it was customary to scatter rose-leaves from the ceiling of the churches to recall the miracle of the fiery tongues. In France it was customary to blow trumpets during Divine service, to recall the sound of the mighty wind which accompanied the Descent of the Holy Ghost. In England the gentry amused themselves with horse racing.

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We can tend to think of the Spirit as only having descended once upon the apostles 2000 years ago, whereas in fact, it is happening all the time.

I'll give this example. My Jesuit brother, Fr. Greg Boyle, who works with gangs in East Los Angeles, tells this story.

*“One Saturday, I got back from the detention camps where I say mass. It was 12:30. I had a baptism at 1:00. I thought, well, I got a half-hour to get some things done. You know how it is - full-speed ahead. The church is just a two-minute drive to my office, so I drove to my office real quick. I knew the mail would be there. I unlock the door, and sit in my office. I was going through my mail, getting stuff done.*

*Just then a woman walks into my office whose name I found out later was Lisa. In her mid-thirties. She's never stepped into my office before. Quite well known on First Street, which is where my office is, as a heroin addict and a prostitute. She's always fighting, always yelling, always yelling at someone, shouting into phones, just shouting. Like, 'Please just let me stay there tonight,' pleading with family members. Kind of lives on the streets. She's never stepped into my office until this day. Now I have 20 minutes to get all the things done that I needed to get done.*

*She plunks herself down in the chair, and she just launches, 'Well I need help. Oh I've been to 50 rehabs; I'm known all over - nation-wide. You know, I went to Catholic schools all my life ... eight grades. I graduated from Sacred Heart High School in Lincoln Heights. I first started using heroin when I was 18, right after I graduated. I've been trying to quit since the moment I*

*began.’ And I watch as she leans her head back, pressing it on the wall. Her eyes became these two ponds, water rising to meet the edges, spilling over. She wept quietly there. But when she was done, she leveled her gaze at me and said with great deliberation, ‘I - am - a - disgrace.’ And my shame met her’s, because when she first stepped in that office, I had mistaken her for an interruption.”*

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The Spirit brought both Lisa and Greg out of their upper rooms of darkness and shame. Their lives were changed, and nothing has been the same for them since. We are all in our upper rooms of darkness and shame, wanting our lives to be the changed so that nothing will ever be the same for us again. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in us; this is the feast of Pentecost still happening in us.

A former prison inmate told me recently how when he had hit bottom one more time, he dropped to his knees one night in his cell and asked God for help, to give him a sign, anything, to show him that God cared for him. The next morning at breakfast, he said another inmate whom he didn’t know leaned over to him and said that the Lord had told him during the night to pray for him. His life was changed, and it hasn’t been the same for him since. You could tell by the smile on his face. This was the work of the Holy Spirit in him, this was the event of Pentecost happening in him.

This is nothing new to any of you. We have all experienced God coming into our lives in some special way that changed us and nothing has been the same since. I would like to invite you to reflect on a time when you saw this happen to you, or to someone else.

**--- SHARING ---**

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*Happy Feast of Pentecost!*