

I. WE FIND OURSELVES CELEBRATING THE GLORIOUS FEAST OF PENTECOST, A FEAST JUST AS IMPORTANT AS CHRISTMAS AND EASTER

A. Pentecost originated among the Hebrews as a final celebration of the ingathering of the grain harvest, which had begun at Passover

1. Later Judaism transformed it into a feast of salvation history celebrating the giving of the Law at Sinai and the establishment of Israel as God's people
2. All these associations were carried over into our Christian feast which marks the conclusion of the great fifty days of the Easter Season
3. For our time the grain harvest and the Law are replaced by the gift of the Spirit, and the constitution of the old Israelites is replaced by the constitution of the new People of God, Christian believers
4. The feast of the Law becomes the feast of the Spirit

B. The importance of Pentecost, the Feast of the Spirit, is that the Holy Spirit enables us to witness, to proclaim, to forgive, and to bring peace

1. By Christ's ascending into heaven and sending the Spirit, he makes his mission our mission
2. Thus, we are enabled to continue Jesus' mission through the gift of the Spirit, "which is given for some benefit" to the whole community
3. Jesus gives the Holy Spirit so that disciples can take up his own mission: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."
4. That mission is to proclaim the gospel to all the world
5. It is the Spirit who transforms us into who we need to be to fulfill Jesus' mission: the one Body of Christ created from diverse members and blessed with different gifts
6. We tend to think of Jesus' mission as the mission of the institutional church
 - a) *Pentecost reminds us that the mission is really ours, personally*
 - b) *The Spirit is breathed into each of us, and, hence, each of us must take up the mission of Jesus*

II. PENTECOST IS TRADITIONALLY REFERRED TO AS THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH

A. And that it is

B. The birthday of our Mother the Church

1. Wherein we learn to witness as we are taught
2. Through whom we are strengthened to proclaim
3. Modeling for us the gift of forgiveness
4. And bringing us peace
5. We celebrate because of the Spirit at work within our Holy Mother the Church
 - a) *A Spirit which Jesus and his Body the Church have shared with us from the day of our baptism*
 - b) *A Spirit whose gifts were bestowed superabundantly upon us through the Sacrament of Confirmation [which we will celebrate here in a few minutes]*
 - c) *A Spirit which empowers each of us to take up the mission of Jesus*

C. Teaching, strengthening for proclamation, modeling forgiveness, and bringing peace

1. Effects of the Spirit in the church and in our lives
2. Effects of the maternal care shown us by Holy Mother Church

III. YOU CAN PROBABLY GUESS WHERE I AM GOING NOW

A. On Pentecost this year our society also celebrates the gift of motherhood

B. We celebrate, we remember, we are grateful for the maternal care shown by those whom we know and love for their mothering of us

1. They, along with our fathers and other family members, were probably our first teachers
2. They nurtured us, often at their breast, so that we could be strengthened into the people we are and be unashamed to proclaim who we are
3. They were instrumental in modeling for us a forgiving lifestyle
 - a) *They changed our diapers*
 - b) *They cleaned up our messes*

- c) *They loved us through our mistakes*
- d) *They cared enough to discipline us*
- e) *They even taught us to say "I'm sorry," "Please forgive me," "I forgive you"*

4. They brought us peace as they cradled us in their arms, held us on their laps, and drew us into full body hugs

C. Motherhood is one powerful manifestation of the effects which the Holy Spirit brings into our lives

IV. THE SPIRIT IS BREATHED INTO EACH OF US AND, HENCE, EACH OF US MUST TAKE UP THE MISSION OF JESUS

A. We do that in our individual lives

1. We teach

- a) *Whenever we are willing to answer questions about our faith*
- b) *When we teach the faith at home, in Faith formation sessions, in Why Catholic? Groups or adult bible studies*

2. We proclaim to others

- a) *By the example of our lives*
- b) *By faithfully participating in Mass, not just by being present but with full consciousness and activity*
- c) *By our public fasting and abstinence during Lent*

3. We forgive

- a) *Because we know we have been forgiven by so many so many times*
- b) *We set aside the small hurts and petty bickering*

4. We bring peace

- a) *By cultivating an attitude of serenity*
- b) *By preferring means of open communication and dialogue rather than conflict*

B. We also take up the mission of Jesus as a community of faith

1. By teaching all age groups the same basic message and committing as a community to continue our growth in faith
 - a) *I am grateful to all who have aided our movement forward along the lines of Whole community Catechesis*
 - b) *I am grateful for all of you who have assumed a public role of teaching as Faith Formation Catechists, Bible Study leaders, and small group animators in Why Catholic?*
2. By proclaiming our faith openly
 - a) *Not in flashy ways that splash the parish's name all over town*
 - b) *But by working with Helping Hands, Friends of the Library, Rockwall County Committee on the Aging, and participating in other public expressions of support for life and health and the well being of all people*
 - c) *By giving yourselves to our public Lenten Penance of Fasting and Abstinence on the Fridays of Lent and wearing ashes on Ash Wednesday*
 - d) *By publicly and communally celebrating the Sacraments of the Church*
3. By being a forgiving community
 - a) *Setting aside old hurts and controversies and divisions*
 - b) *Forgiving and asking forgiveness*
 - c) *And those efforts must continue because there are still bruises and open wounds*
4. By being a people of peace
 - a) *As was exhibited so profoundly at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday this year*
 - b) *If you weren't there this year, come next year*
 - c) *As pews and aisles and comfort levels were set aside for the greater good of being Church, being a community of faith, being the Body of Christ*

V. THANK YOU MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS FOR YOUR TEACHING, AND PROCLAMATION AND FORGIVENESS AND PEACEMAKING

- A. Thank you mothers for being among the first in our lives to manifest those effects of the Spirit to all of us
- B. And thank you, Lord, for Pentecost

- 1. Pentecost**
- 2. The coming of the Spirit**
- 3. Happens each time we do the works of God and manifest the Spirit for the benefit of all**

C. “Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.”