

Pentecost Sunday

The story is told about a man who went to the Priest and said, "Father, I want you to say a Mass for my dog." The Priest was indignant. "What do you mean, say a Mass for your dog?" "It's my pet dog," said the man. "I loved that dog and I'd like you to offer a Mass for him." "We don't offer Masses for dogs here," the Priest said. "You might try the denomination down the street. Ask them if they have a service for you." As the man was leaving, he said to the Priest, "I really loved that dog. I was planning to give a five-thousand-dollar stipend for the Mass." And the Priest said, "Wait a minute! Why didn't tell me that your dog was Catholic?!"

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate an important day of our church, the birthday of the church. We celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost, the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary. We remember the 20th Anniversary of our worship in this beautiful church. May the Spirit of the Lord be upon us and renew our faith to be stronger and healthier.

The readings of the day of feast bring us to reflect on the deeper language of the Holy Spirit. In our ordinary life, we have a language for communication. We use words that communicate the meaning of it. We speak multiple languages based on the need. Some speak one or two or more. This language helps with communicating. There are other ways to communicate.

How? How can we speak to each other beyond communicating in the ordinary languages that we know? Today's first reading explains it very well.

When the Evangelist, Luke, describes the first Pentecost, he tells us that, after receiving the Holy Spirit, the first followers of Jesus came out into public and began speaking and, everyone, absolutely everyone, no matter their ethnicity or language, heard the disciples' words as if they were in their own language. The old barriers of native language no longer blocked hearing or understanding. The language given by the Spirit transcended ethnicity and native tongue.

It is too easy for us to simply write this off as a miracle, an exceptional, foundational intervention by God which helped found the church. That may also be true, but there is another point to this: language functions at different levels. Language has a relative power. Sometimes it can also deceive and lie. Words don't always accurately mirror the heart. Moreover, they invariably fail us just when we most need them, especially in in-depth situations where tragedy, death, and betrayal render us mute.

There are other types of language. Our bodies can communicate more than our words. Our bodies speak louder and more honestly than our words because we have emotions.

We still have deeper language: the language of the Spirit, a language that transcends both bodily and spoken languages. That is the language of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not just a person inside the Trinity, hopelessly abstract and beyond our conception. Scripture tells us that the Holy Spirit is also very concrete, conceivable, and tangible inside of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, longsuffering, fidelity, gentleness, and chastity. These speak through us more loudly and clearly, either in their presence or their absence, than do all our words and gestures.

The holy spirit helps to read the hearts of the people. Hearts read hearts, and the Spirit recognizes it, and it is deeper. It helps us with our actions. That language is more profound than any other language. For example, you have a heart to help the poor somewhere around. They do not know. But you all can read their needs, in your minds and hearts, because of the Spirit working in you.

Let us learn the language of the Holy Spirit. It is deeper and fresh.

A prayer by cardinal St. Newman.

Come Holy Spirit

Make our ears to hear

Make our eyes to see

Make our mouths to speak

Make our hearts to seek

Make our hands to reach out

And touch the world with your love. AMEN."