

Homily – Pentecost A

Pentecost literally means 50th. It is a feast celebrated on the 50th day after the Passover feast by the Jews and a feast celebrated on the 50th day after the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus by Christians. The Jewish Pentecost was originally a post-harvest thanksgiving feast. Later, the Jews included in it the remembrance of God's Covenants with Noah after the Deluge and with Moses at Mt. Sinai. (An anecdote may be added here).

On the day of Pentecost: 1) The Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary as fiery tongues. 2) The frightened apostles were transformed into fiery preachers and evangelizers and were given the gift of tongues by a special anointing of the Holy Spirit. 3) The listeners experienced a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit through the apostles' gift of tongues: they heard Peter speaking in their native languages. 4) The early Christians became powerful witnesses and brave martyrs for their Faith in Jesus.

The role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life: 1) As an indwelling God, the Holy Spirit makes us His Living Temples. 2) As a strengthening God, He strengthens us in our fight against temptations and in our mission of bearing witness to Christ by our transparent Christian lives. 3) As a sanctifying God, He makes us holy through the Sacraments: a) Through Baptism He makes us children of God and heirs of Heaven. b) Through Confirmation, He makes us temples of God, warriors, and defenders of the Faith. c) Through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, He enables us to be reconciled with God by pardoning our sins. d) Through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, He gives us spiritual nourishment by converting bread and wine into Jesus' Body and Blood through Epiclesis. e) Through the Sacraments of the priesthood and matrimony, He makes the Church community holy. 4) As a teaching and guiding God, He clarifies and constantly reminds us of Christ's teachings and guides the Magisterium of the Church to teach Christ's teachings correctly. 5) As a listening and speaking God, He listens to our prayers, enables us to pray, and speaks to us, mainly through the Bible. 6) As a Giver of gifts, He gives us His gifts, fruits, and charisms, thus enriching the Church.

Messages: We need to permit the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives: 1) by constantly remembering His holy presence and behaving well,

2) by praying for His daily anointing so that we may fight against our temptations and control our evil tendencies, evil habits, and addictions,

3) by asking His daily assistance to pray, listening to God through meditative Bible reading, and talking to Him; and

4) by asking the help of the Holy Spirit to do good for others and to get reconciled with God and others every day.