

## Pentecost 2022 C

Way back in Chapter 11 of the Book of Genesis we find the familiar story of the Tower of Babel. It may strike the modern ear as a rather contrived explanation of why there are so many human languages, *but we know all too well the deeper reality the story is intended to name* – the many kinds of conflict and division in the human community. As the Babel story rightly says, this division ultimately arises out of the pride that closes the human spirit to a truth greater than itself. *In a world with smart phones and email and SnapChat, it is ironic that it seems harder and harder to connect with another, heart to heart, spirit to spirit, and to broaden our view of the world beyond our own advantage and preferences.* Words get tricky. They may share our deepest convictions, but they can also fail to communicate as we intend. Words may heal or wound, unite or divide. They can convey truth, or they can conceal falsehoods. Words can inspire or discourage. What the Babel story describes is not so much the challenge of separate languages as the painfully stubborn fact of a divided human family.

When the promise of Jesus was fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit came on that first Pentecost, the effect of that promised Gift was understanding, uniting the faithful in the same truth and hope in Jesus. Unity is the Spirit's gift, but also a responsibility and a constant labor. Sowing division and conflict is easy, and anyone can do it, sometimes even without realizing it. But making us ONE in the Body of Christ takes a power greater than merely human efforts. Pentecost begins the healing of Babel – the Spirit, Who is the Bond of Love between Father and Son, starts to undo the divisions created by human weakness and willfulness, as our Advocate and Consoler works to change us from within.

The Spirit comes to remind us of all that Christ told us, lead us to truth, comfort us in our sorrows. The Spirit confirms our faith in critical moments, brings forgiveness, makes us holy, inspires words of consolation and works of mercy. But of all the Spirit does, perhaps what we need the most in our times is this gift of unity – to be drawn together at a deeper level than shared interests or opinions could ever do.

Where words and emotions make it hard to reach one another's spirits with understanding and harmony, the gift of the Holy Spirit of God can heal our wounds, renew our strength, guide the hearts that go astray.

As Christ emerged from the tomb on Easter morning, so on Pentecost, the Body of Christ, the Church, is revealed to the world, making the mission of Jesus an ongoing presence in the world and its history. In the Old Testament, Pentecost marked the first fruits of the harvest, the early grain; so for the Church, Pentecost saw the first fruits of the Resurrection, the harvest of grace beginning in the world. That strong mighty wind was the very Breath of God, the same Breath that Jesus gave in a gentler way to the Eleven in the Upper Room.

In a time with so much sorrow and pain in our world and communities, we rightly hear the call to share the work of the Spirit as Consoler for those in need. But we also thank God for the signs of the Spirit's work in our midst, drawing us even through the Cross to love of Jesus and His Sacred Heart. On this Pentecost, take a moment of silence now to think of one or two places or relationships in your life that need healing, unity, and peace; take a deep breath open to God, and pray: ***Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created; and you shall renew the face of the earth.***