

Pentecost Sunday
Fr. Chad S. Green
Holy Family Catholic Church
Kirkland, Washington
9 June 2019

Acts 2:1-11
Psalm 104
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13 or Romans 8:8-17
("Come, Holy Spirit...") John 20:19-23 or John 14:15-16, 23b-26

Filled with the Holy Spirit

Yesterday morning I was at St. Michael Parish in Olympia, attending the Ordination Mass for my friend, Thomas Tran, who was ordained a deacon. He and I were in seminary together at Mount Angel for several years. Many of you are familiar with the beautiful Ordination Ritual, from last year attending the Deacon Ordination for our friend and former seminarian here at Holy Family, Ben Bray, at St. Anthony Parish in Renton. Reminder that Deacon Ben will be ordained a priest (along with Deacon Carlos Orozco and your upcoming new Parochial Vicar, Deacon Tyler Johnson) at St. James Cathedral on June 22nd. And, God-willing, my friend, the newly-ordained Deacon Thomas, will be ordained a priest at St. James Cathedral a year from now, in June 2020.

The First Reading at Deacon Thomas's Ordination Mass yesterday morning was from the Acts of the Apostles, the same Book that we've been reading from in the First Reading at Mass throughout these seven weeks of Easter. Fitting for a Deacon Ordination, the reading recounted how the Twelve Apostles came to realize their need for assistants in their ministry—specifically, assistants who could minister to the widows and the poor.¹ So, they selected "seven reputable men" to help them.² They "prayed and laid hands on them," thus ordaining them as the first deacons in our Church.³ A ritual that continues to this day, just like yesterday morning, when Bishop Elizondo prayed and laid hands on Thomas; or like last year, when Bishop Mueggenborg prayed and laid hands on Ben.

This reading from the Acts of the Apostles identified two primary criteria for selecting these first seven deacons: that they be wise and that they be filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴ When I heard that reading, that particular phrase caught my attention. And, I thought: That's right, the only way for Thomas—or for any man—to be the deacon he's called to be—the deacon I know he hopes to be—the only way for Deacon Ben or me any other priest or deacon to be what he's called to be—is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

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And, as it turns out, deacons and priests are the only ones who are called to be filled with the Holy Spirit, isn't that right? No? Who else needs to be filled with the Holy Spirit? Husbands, wives, single people. Mothers, fathers, daughters, sons. Brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles. Religious, priests, bishops.

This is a universal call for all disciples of Jesus Christ. Whatever our vocation or state in life, the only way to be the disciple we're called to be—that we hope to be—is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The only way to be the married, single, or religious person that we're called to be—that we hope to be—is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Whatever our job or ministry may be, the only way to be what we're called to be in the workplace, in the parish, in the community—is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We can have all kinds of education, preparation, training, skills, and talents. But none of that will be effective—none of that will be enough—if we're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

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Throughout these seven weeks of the Easter Season, in the First Reading at Mass—both on Sundays and weekdays—we've been hearing about the Acts, the Works, the Actions of the Apostles. And if we reread these readings, we'll see that, quite often, what they're doing—their

Acts—not just those of the Apostles and deacons—the Acts of all the disciples are only done *with* the Holy Spirit.

For example, last Sunday, on the Ascension, we heard that Jesus gave “instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.” Telling them that “in a few days [they would] be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” And that they would “receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon” them.⁵ All through Easter, in the Book of Acts, we’ve heard about the disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit, and how the power of the Holy Spirit worked through them.

Peter and the Apostles could endure persecution from the high priest because God had given them the Holy Spirit.⁶ When the Gentiles heard Paul and Barnabas preach the Good News to them, their spirits were strengthened and they “were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.”⁷ When the Apostles and elders made a decision about the governance of the Church, they attributed it as “the decision of the Holy Spirit.”⁸

Furthermore, way back on Easter Sunday, we were reminded by the Holy Spirit-inspired preaching of Peter that what Jesus did was done *with the Holy Spirit*. He preached that “God [had] anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. [And because of that, Jesus] went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil.”⁹ My friends, *even Jesus* couldn’t do what He did without being filled with the Holy Spirit.

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Some of you may be familiar with the Canadian Catholic layman, Jean Vanier, who died last month at the age of 90. He was a philosopher, theologian, and humanitarian who founded L’Arche in 1964—an international organization that provides “homes and workplaces where

people with and without intellectual disabilities live and work together as peers.”¹⁰ Vanier described human beings in this way:

We human beings are a mixture
of the presence of God and the absence of God,
of light and darkness,
truth and chaos,
goodness and evil,
openness and closedness.
No human being in himself or herself is holy or pure.
We become holy only through the holiness of God.¹¹

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My brothers and sisters, in order for us to do anything, we must fight back against being that mixture. We must become *more* the presence of God than the absence. *More* the presence of light, of truth, of goodness, of openness. But we cannot do this on our own. We can only do this by being *filled with the Holy Spirit*.

How? How can we be more and more *filled with the Holy Spirit*? ***Ask for it!*** Jesus has already promised to give us the Holy Spirit.¹² We’ve already received testimony of how He fulfilled that promise in a powerful way on the first Pentecost:

...they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. . . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...¹³

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Brothers and sisters, God has already fulfilled His promise and given each of us the Holy Spirit: in Baptism; in Confirmation; in Marriage; in Ordination. Every time we go to Confession we are given the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Every time we receive Anointing of the Sick we are given the Holy Spirit.¹⁵ And every time we are present at Mass and receive the Eucharist, we not only receive the Body and Blood of Christ—we receive the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ In all the Sacraments, the Holy Spirit comes down and we are truly *filled with the Holy Spirit*.

But it's not only in the Sacraments that we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We can ask for the Holy Spirit all the time, anytime, every day. In order to be the disciples we are called to be, we *need* to ask for the Holy Spirit all the time, anytime, every day. And we can do this with the ancient and simple prayer: "Come, Holy Spirit!"¹⁷

Repeat after me: *Come, Holy Spirit! Come, Holy Spirit! Come, Holy Spirit!*

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And so we pray:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful
 And kindle in them the fire of Your love
 V: Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created
 R: And You shall renew the face of the earth

Let us Pray:

O God, Who instructed the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit,
 Grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation.
 Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.¹⁸

¹ Acts 6:1

² Acts 6:3

³ Acts 6:6

⁴ Acts 6:3, 5

⁵ Ascension Sunday, First Reading: Acts 1:2, 5, 8

⁶ Third Sunday of Easter, First Reading: Acts 5:32

⁷ Fourth Sunday of Easter, First Reading: Acts 13:52

Fifth Sunday of Easter, First Reading: Acts 14:22

⁸ Sixth Sunday of Easter, First Reading: Acts 15:28

⁹ Easter Sunday, The Mass of Easter Day, First Reading: Acts 10:38

¹⁰ www.larcheusa.org: "L'Arche communities in the United States provide homes and workplaces where people with and without intellectual disabilities live and work together as peers, create inclusive communities of faith and friendship, and transform society through relationships that cross social boundaries."

¹¹ Jean Vanier, "Welcome the Holy" from *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus*

¹² John 14:16-17: "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth..."

¹³ Pentecost Sunday, Mass during the Day, First Reading: Acts 2:1-2, 4

¹⁴ From the *Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents*, Prayer of Absolution: "God, the Father of Mercies, through the Death and Resurrection of His Son, has sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins..."

¹⁵ From the *Rite of Anointing of the Sick*, Prayer of Anointing: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in His love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit."

¹⁶ From *Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer II: "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ."

¹⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2671:

The traditional form of petition to the Holy Spirit is to invoke the Father through Christ our Lord to give us the Consoler Spirit (Luke 11:13). Jesus insists on this petition to be made in his name at the very moment when he promises the gift of the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13). But the simplest and most direct prayer is also

traditional, 'Come, Holy Spirit,' and every liturgical tradition has developed it in antiphons and hymns:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. (*Roman Missal, Pentecost Sequence*)

¹⁸ *Prayer to the Holy Spirit*