

## **Homily – Feast of Pentecost**

**June 9, 2019**

Both fire and wind can be wonderfully beneficial or tragically destructive for the human family. They may appear as a great power unleashed upon the world in lightning, hurricane, and tornado. Or they can light the pilgrim's way and cool the earth on a hot day. Traditional wisdom reflects the tension between the potential benefit and the destruction of wind and fire: Embrace the wind, but beware of it. Kindle the fire, but handle it with great caution.

On Pentecost, God sends a mighty wind rushing through the streets of Jerusalem and the upper room. His fire burns ardently in the hearts of Jesus' disciples, giving them courage, strength, and boldness for the sake of the kingdom. God's wind and fire set in motion a mighty proclamation of the gospel throughout the world. Fire and wind change simple fishermen into fearless evangelists. They transform uneducated Galileans into articulate missionaries who irresistibly sweep through the Roman Empire.

Jesus gave his disciples a similar gift of the Spirit in the same upper room on Easter. There he gently breathed upon them. Their fear was transformed into joy by his presence in their midst. Then he

sends them forth, commissioning them to carry on his mission and ministry throughout the world by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God's wind and fire are also part of our lives. God has brought us together this morning to celebrate the presence of the risen Lord and his Holy Spirit in the Church and within the heart of each of us. Because of our baptism, you and I share responsibility for the Church's mission and ministry. We are the disciples of today. We are God's eyes and ears and hands and mouths. In a certain sense, without us, he can do nothing because he does not impose himself on us or on our world. God needs us to be faithful disciples!

God invites us to the upper room on Pentecost so that we may rejoice in the presence of the risen Lord and the Holy Spirit. As Pope Francis has said, "the Holy Spirit changes hearts. . . The Spirit frees hearts chained by fear. . . He opens hearts that are closed. . . [The Holy Spirit] does not free us from the weight of our problems but liberates us *within* so that we can face them." We join in the Holy Father's prayer: "Holy Spirit, blow upon us, blow into our hearts and makes us breathe forth the tenderness of the Father! Blow upon our world the soothing warmth of peace and refreshing cool of hope. Come, Holy Spirit! *Ven, Holy Spirit, ven! Ven, Holy Spirit, ven!*