



# **Archdiocese of San Antonio**

## **Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller**



**Homily – Pentecost Sunday**

**May 24, 2015**

**The morning of Pentecost arrived with a mighty wind! Things were coming loose, breaking open. Something new was happening. The wind that morning was like the mysterious wind that swept over the dark waters of chaos on the first day of creation. The wind is always mysterious. We can see its powerful effects, but we cannot see the wind itself. We can feel it blow through our hair, and, at times, we may hear its murmur or roar. It is no wonder that the wind reminds us of the Spirit of God whose presence in our lives we experience in deep and mysterious ways.**

**The Spirit of God is also like a gentle breath of air. In the Book of Genesis, after God had shaped the man out of the earth, God breathed into the man's nostrils the breath of life and created a human being. Similarly, in today's Gospel, Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, and they are transformed from fearful individuals into a new creation full of joy. In breathing the Holy Spirit**

upon the disciples, Jesus re-creates them. Then he places his work – his mission and ministry – in their hands. He sends them into the whole world, as the Father had sent him – to show God’s healing love, mercy, and compassion in their words and deeds. Through them – and through us -- God’s mysterious presence will be felt throughout the world.

When the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, in the form of tongues of fire, they were again re-created. In particular, the Spirit creates in Peter a new man who now has the gift of bold, confident speech. Peter begins to proclaim the good news of the gospel. But remember: this is the same Peter who a few weeks before could not speak of Jesus, not even to a servant girl at midnight!

But on Pentecost, Peter becomes a new person. The power of God accomplishes what God wants in spite of all obstacles. The wind blows where it will. God’s will is always done – eventually, ultimately.

The story of Pentecost, then, involves a mighty wind and tongues of fire. It reveals that the first gift of the Holy Spirit is speech, the gift of proclaiming God’s Word. This is his first gift to the

**Church, a gift that is handed on from generation to generation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

**My dear brothers and sisters in the risen Lord, God's wind and fire are also part of our lives. God has brought us together today to celebrate the presence of the risen Lord and his Holy Spirit in the Church through the world, in the Archdiocese of San Antonio and this parish, within the heart of each one 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.**

**At times we are quite like the first disciples. We may keep our religious faith and values hidden in the upper room while we go about our daily life and work. We return to the room on a regular basis, but our fear and timidity hinder us from taking our religious and moral values with us when we return to the public arena.**

**God invites us to the upper room on Pentecost so that we may rejoice in the presence of the risen Lord among us -- recommit ourselves to our baptismal responsibilities regarding the Church's**

mission – allow the Holy Spirit to engulf us with wind and fire, empowering us to live out our vocation in the world.

Yesterday was the beatification of martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador. He gave his life, like the Good Shepherd, for his flock. He was fully committed to striving for justice for the poor, and this led to his murder. In the beatification of this Central American Archbishop, we see Pope Francis' vision of the Church's mission and ministry to which we are all called – even though it may lead to persecution.

In accord with the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Church is to fully engage the modern world with all its struggles. We are to reach out to the suffering, the neglected, the most vulnerable, those at the margins of society. The Church is to be prophetic – examining our lives and our society in the light of the gospel and taking action to expand the kingdom of God. Above all, we are to proclaim the gospel of God's mercy, love, and compassion – not only in our words but also in our deeds!

*Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*