

## **Homily – Saturday of the Seventh Week of Easter Pastoral Council Mass – June 4, 2022**

Tonight we will celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost. The descent of the Holy Spirit took place while the disciples prayed in community – around Mary – together with other women. We ask the Holy Spirit to also come to us and grant us the same gifts.

Saint Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit, appeals to Caesar. Today we are told about his arrival in Rome and how he was there under house arrest, continuously guarded by a Roman soldier. From the beginning, he kept proclaiming the Good News of Jesus as his witness. He did it first with his Jewish brothers and sisters, whom he called and with whom he met; then to all the others, convinced as he was that the Kingdom did not belong exclusively to the Jews, but to everyone.

In the previous verses, Jesus reveals to Peter what the end of his life and his martyrdom will be like. His reaction was – as usual – transparent and still immature. Instead of being satisfied with what Jesus anticipated, he expressed his desire to know what would happen to John, the disciple whom Jesus loved so much. Jesus makes Peter see his own imperfection. His only concern should be to follow the Lord, with all that that entails. We know that Peter finally got the message. More importantly, with the gifts of the Holy Spirit he was able to bear witness to his Master to the very end.

The Acts of the Apostles ends with Paul's last years in Rome and his death there. The Gospel of John ends with Peter on the scene, in intimate conversation with Jesus.

But there are more “Acts”, because there have been and there are more Apostles. We know some of them because they have been

written. However, most are anonymous to us, not to God. The fact is, once Jesus ascends to heaven, he promises us the Holy Spirit. The Church is born. Our time begins, and the Kingdom of God for us will be what the Holy Spirit wants and we allow him to make of us. Ours are the new Acts of the ever new Apostles, who try to live the premise of Jesus: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (Jn 20, 21). Since then we know that no one can say that Jesus is Lord if he is not moved by the Holy Spirit.

Since then, as followers of Jesus guided by the Holy Spirit, we – members of the Church – are continuators of the Master's mission. In practice, this shows because we live as Jesus lived. We love as He did, we try to forgive as He did, and we try to communicate with God the Father as He did. Those who see us behave in this way will recognize the Holy Spirit.

As we continue to mourn the victims in Uvalde, Buffalo, Tulsa, Ukraine and so many other places where nonsense violence has caused death, we affirm our faith in the Giver of Life. Life is the fruit of love. Pope recently said: (quote) “Only someone who makes us feel loved for who we are can give peace to our hearts. The Holy Spirit, the love of God, does precisely that. He comes down within us; as the Spirit, he acts in our spirit. He comes down ‘within the heart’, as ‘the soul’s most welcome guest.’ He is the very love of God, who does not abandon us; for being present to those who are alone is itself a source of comfort.” (end of quote).

Our Lady of Guadalupe, open our hearts to the Comforter and make us bold peacemakers.