

Pentecost B  
Ezekiel 37:1-14

St. John Paul II  
1 Corinthians 12:3-13

2018  
John 20:19-23

The Feast of Pentecost has always held a special place in my heart.

I was ordained a priest Pentecost weekend 28 years ago  
and I presided at Mass for the very first time on that Saturday Evening.

As was mentioned at the beginning of Mass we have options for readings  
On this feast and the ones I chose today are the same ones I chose  
28 years ago.

The vestments that I wear today are the ones that I wore 28 years ago.  
These vestments were made for me by one of the former principals at  
St. Paul School—who I worked for as a teacher  
when she was principal at St. Philip Neri Parish in Indianapolis.

And so Pentecost has always had a special place in my heart as a priest.

It also has a special place in the heart of the Church.

Often referred to as the birthday of the Church...  
Pentecost is the culmination of God's plan for our salvation—  
A plan begun on Good Friday, brought to life on Easter Sunday  
culminating in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.  
And BOOM the Church began...

It is, then, I presume, a great time to evaluate how we are doing as Church,  
How we are doing particularly as a parish.

And I use two things to measure that!

One of those things is our parish Mission Statement  
and our Parish Vision Statement. And we'll look at those in a minute.  
The second thing I use to measure that is you!

We are only doing a good job if you are growing in your discipleship walk,  
your relationship with Jesus, your living out of your faith.  
If that is not happening in significant ways---then I as your pastor—  
The pastoral team, our parish council has to look at that  
and see what needs to be done differently.

Who can tell me our parish mission statement,  
without looking in your hymnal...without looking at the back wall.

Building God's Kingdom, by growing disciples and making disciples through love of God and neighbor.

Who can tell me where that Mission statement comes from?

Building God's Kingdom—The first proclamation Jesus makes...  
The kingdom of God is at hand.

Growing and making Disciples from great Commission...

Through Love of God and Neighbor—two greatest commandments.

Now the quiz is going to get a little tougher...

Who can tell me one of the seven points of the vision statements.  
We spent this past year looking at those in our Mission Beyond Series...

- 1) Parishioners who have a personal relationship with Jesus and feel comfortable sharing their faith with others  
Small groups, Adoration, Daily Scripture Reflections, parish retreats and parish missions, LA Congress, Stewardship of Time...
- 2) Parishioners who are open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives  
Spiritual Gifts Course, Stewardship of Talent, Some have participated in the Clifton Strengths Finders...  
2<sup>nd</sup> reading today... Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 3) Parishioners who have a knowledge and love of the scriptures  
Bible Studies, Small Groups, Daily Scripture reflections, The First Fifteen,
- 4) Parishioners who know basic Catholic teaching  
Adult Faith Formation Programs, the Catechism in a Year
- 5) Parishioners who are committed to daily prayer and can pray spontaneously when asked to do so  
Adoration, Prayer Partners, The First Fifteen,
- 6) Parishioners who are committed to Sunday Eucharist  
Increase in participation—thank you for that—Music Ministry  
Maybe you've been away from the Church and have returned
- 7) Parishioners who see his/her life as given to God's work through service

First Parish Day of Service, Outreach programs—Marie's Ministry, St. Joseph the Worker, Exit Zero, Haiti, Food Pantry

Okay, now here is the real test...

In a moment I'm gonna ask you to stand if in the last two or three years  
You feel like you can identify a real shift in your discipleship walk—  
Maybe it is because of something outside of the parish here...

Why are we doing this?

A Couple of reasons:

Those involved in the leadership space will tell you that to have a goal  
It must be measurable....this is the yardstick...

Secondly, we celebrate RCIA, Confirmations, Baptisms...

But I think we need to celebrate the ways people  
are growing in their faith as well.

On this Feast of Pentecost we need to celebrate  
that the Holy Spirit is active here at JP11 Parish

And there is one more reason...and I'll get to that in a minute.

For right now, I'm gonna ask you to stand if in the last couple of years  
You feel like you have had significant growth in your discipleship walk.  
Do not think of this as bragging...because it's God's working in you...  
It's the Holy Spirit at work in you...

Prayer of Blessing over those standing.

And now, I promised you a third reason why I am doing this...

And this is going to be a little challenging  
and might make some of you uncomfortable

But if you didn't stand, let this be a wake-up call for you...

What are you going to do to grow in your faith this next year?

Pray that God's Spirit will touch you just as it did the early Church...

My friends, today we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is alive here at JP11...

May the Spirit also be alive in your heart.