

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI, in his book The Yes of Jesus Christ, writes: “Hope is the fruit of faith, we have said: in it our life stretches itself out towards the totality of all that is real, towards a boundless future that becomes accessible to us in faith. This fulfilled totality of being to which faith provides the key is a love without reserve - a love that is an immense affirmation of my existence and that discloses the fullness of all being to me in its breadth and depth. In it the creator of all things says to me: ‘All that is mine is yours’ (Luke 15:31). God, however, is ‘all in all,’ ‘everything to everyone’ (1 Cor. 15:28): the person to whom he imparts all that is his is someone for whom there are no longer any ends or boundaries. The love that Christian hope approaches in the light of faith is not something purely private and individual: it does not enclose me in a little world of my own.”

These words are so appropriate today as the Church celebrates its “birthday”, the Feast of Pentecost. The Advocate Jesus Christ promised to his disciples, his companions, comes to them in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit binds us together; it unifies us to give honor and glory to God. As we read in Acts, people spoke in their native language, but it was a language of love and unity. “We are Parthians, Elamites...inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia...both Jews and converts...speaking of the mighty acts of God.” As the apostolic zeal of the first disciples and apostles stretched beyond the borders of the epicenter of Jerusalem, diverse cultures and religious traditions embraced the Good News that Jesus Christ suffered and died for our sins and rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven at the completion of his earthly mission to return to his Father.

In addition to this tangible and obvious diversity, there is also a diversity of gifts imparted in a unique way to all Christians. As we are reminded so vividly in Corinthians: “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord...we were all given to drink of one Spirit.” When Jesus met his disciples in the upper room, his greeting to them was “Peace be with you!” This peace he imparted to them is manifested in the Holy Spirit. This Spirit impelled the disciples to not be afraid to leave that enclave and boldly and joyfully proclaim the Good News. Because of all that they had experienced with Our Lord, they now had the credibility to continue his mission. In addition to bidding them peace, he told them: “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” This last point is determinative to living a genuinely authentic Christian identity: to forgive others and seek forgiveness and reconciliation. These are essential characteristics to living most fully the gifts of grace and the Holy Spirit.

My sincere thanks to all who made our parish festival, “Disco Fever”, such a success!!! So many people chipped in and used their unique gifts and talents for the service of all. The crowds were exceptional and there was such a positive spirit and energy that is emblematic of our St. Pius family. I am also grateful to all who came to the 9:30 Mass last Sunday to bid farewell to Brother Zach and Brother John. As I noted in my homily, they came to me as my spiritual sons and they now leave as brothers. There are no words to express my gratitude to God for bringing them our way. They were generous and enthusiastic; open and empathetic to others; men of prayer who demonstrated what it means to be good and holy men in the service of the Church.

Fr. Tom