

Reflection for Pentecost

This Sunday, fifty days after Easter Sunday we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the birthday of our Church. Today we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and other disciples following the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ. This marks the birth of the Church.

The Crucifixion of Jesus, his death leads to the Resurrection which leads to the Ascension which leads to the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Feast of Pentecost. The events that we celebrate in the Easter Season build on each other and each event depends of the prior one. There is a natural progression that is a part of the Easter Season and is also a part of the Seasons of Advent, Christmas and Lent. Each day, each event builds on the previous one and so it is the same in our own lives.

Our Baptisms lead to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which leads to Holy Communion and Confirmation. The Sacraments of Initiation build one on the other. One must first be baptized to receive Holy Communion and Confirm one's faith in Jesus Christ. It is natural for the Sacrament of Confirmation to take place after the Sacrament of Baptism, but it would make no sense for a person to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before Baptism, what would they be confirming?

It is the same with our lives in this world, who learns to run before they learn to walk, there is a natural order and progression to things. The message that we can take from the order of the Feasts that we have celebrated can serve us well in our daily lives. Our loving God who has created you and I and all we are and ever hope to be has created a natural order in this world. This natural order is something that might be worth reflecting on and pondering. God the creator of heaven and earth has a plan for everything, and a salvific plan for all humanity. There is an order in this world just as there is an order to the Sacraments of the Church and Holy Scripture. With anything one can always find an exception to the norm or the general rule. But the exception is not the norm and can be seen as a grace filled moment, a gift from our creator God.

The gift that we receive from God can be a unique talent or ability. This gift could just as easily be an extra challenge that causes us to focus and try that much harder. Or maybe the gift we have been given is that we are a normal average person. Whatever our gift or gifts are as individuals, they are from our God, who has created us. We should know that these gifts are a part of a larger plan. Our individual gifts are not meant to be used alone, but in concert with others that have the same beliefs and trust in the one true God.

The challenge that we have as humans is to use the gifts and talents that God has given us to help the world become a better place, but at the same time being able to recognize and respect God's natural and divine plan for us and the world. This can cause a natural tension within an individual and even within society. Improving the world, we live in and the human condition can and should be in harmony with God's plan.

This Feast of Pentecost is an event that happened on the Jewish Feast of “*Shuvout*” which is a thanksgiving Feast for the first fruits of the wheat harvest but was later associated with the remembrance of the Law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Church’s transformation of the Jewish Feast to a Christian Feast was thus related to the belief that the gift of the Holy Spirit to the followers of Jesus was the first fruits of a new covenant which replaced the old covenant of the Law that was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The new covenant was brought into the world by Jesus to replace the old covenant and to bring about a new age and a new hope of salvation to all humanity.

For us today in the year 2020, looking back at 2,000 years of the Catholic Church responding in this world to the calling of Jesus Christ, this Feast of Pentecost connects us with all the faithful that have journeyed in this world following the one true God. Be it the Feast of Pentecost or the Feast of Shuvout we as a faithful people have been reaching out with our talents and gifts to serve the one true God with open hearts and open minds. May we learn from the past gaining knowledge, wisdom, truth, and faith as we follow God in this world in the company of believers, the Church, looking forward to eternal salvation.