

“The Day the Church was Born”

Last week, the Son of God after He was glorified at His Resurrection, ascended into heaven to retake His place at the right hand of His Father. This week, Jesus poured out His Spirit on His Church.

Celebration of the feast of Pentecost goes back 1000 years before Christ. It was one of the three most important Jewish feasts; just as it is one of the three most important feasts for Christians. For the Jews, it was originally a harvest feast and later, it became the celebration of when God gave them the law on Mt. Sinai establishing them as His people.

It was during the celebration of the feast that the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples. They were empowered, enlightened, and emboldened by the Holy Spirit to speak in all the different languages of the world leading to the conversion of many Jews who were in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover to become follows of Christ.

Again, as in the Resurrection, Pentecost for the followers of Christ occurred on the first day or the beginning of the week while Pentecost for the Jews happened on the last day of the week. The new Pentecost is the new birth for humanity when the Church was born and the Christian religion became the Church for the whole world.

Each Pentecost should be a time we as Christians are renewed by the Holy Spirit if we will let Him change us. We become transformed so we can begin to live a new life that would be pleasing to God. When we accept the invitation of Christ as we journey in this life, we will share in His divine life for eternity.

Saint Augustine of Hippo after he got home from his conversion while in the city of Milan, he was walking down the street when one of his ex-girlfriends saw him and was calling after him repeatedly “*Augustine, it is I,*” “*Augustine, it is I.*” Augustine kept walking and did not acknowledge her. After a while Augustine turned around and said to her “*But it is no longer I.*”

What Augustine did that day was, he let his ex-girlfriend know that he had been transformed by the Holy Spirit. Through the baptism, he had received, and the Holy Spirit sent by Christ, he became a new man. This was something he could only have done by sharing in the Holy Spirit.

When we are transformed and filled by the Holy Spirit, we become Christ like and the sinful nature of the past would pass away. People who knew us will see the difference in us. They will notice that what they knew about us in the past is no longer true. It is like what happened to the disciples after they received the Holy Spirit. Instead of being locked up in a room afraid, they went out to meet the Jews they were afraid of. Instead of being cowardly, they spoke boldly in their languages, all through the power of the Holy Spirit.

He is the same Spirit that Samuel told Saul in the Hebrew Bible “**The Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will join them in their prophetic ecstasy and will become a changed man**” (1 Samuel 10:6). He is the same Spirit that filled Mary at the incarnation. He is the same Spirit that drove Jesus into the desert. He is the same Spirit that we received during our Baptism and Confirmation. He is the same Spirit that is invoked during Mass that changes the bread and

wine we offer to the Father into the Body and Blood of His only begotten Son which the Father gives to us in return.

Like St Joseph, the Holy Spirit is silent but full of action. We do not hear Him speak directly like the Father and the Son did in the Scripture, but He spoke volumes through His actions. He is in us, directing us silently in our hearts. His desire is to always live in us until we could see Him face to face in heaven.

But how do we keep the Holy Spirit active within us always? We can do so by always loving God and our neighbor; and Jesus told us if we love Him, we will keep His commandments. We keep His commandments when we follow the teachings of the Church that was born on that first day of the week in Jerusalem.

As we come to receive Him in the Eucharist, let us ask the Holy Spirit to deepen our faith, hope, and love.