

Happy Birthday to You!

Pentecost

On this Solemnity of Pentecost, we, the Church, celebrate our birthday as the living presence of Christ in the world. This is a day when Christians everywhere are called to evangelize the truth about Jesus Christ. It is the birthday of Mother Church, our source of salvation and Christ's mission today.

As we celebrate the vigil of Pentecost on Saturday night, we hear from the book of Genesis the plan of the people of God to build a tower which would make them equal to God. This story is a simple reminder that the human race has continued (from our first human parents) to presume their own agenda, leaving God's providence out of their vision. The culminating piece of this story is that God thwarts their attempt at equality with the Divine by confusing their speech. The people are scattered to the far reaches of the earth, spoiling their plans. It will take the workings of a Savior to undo the infidelity of humanity.

As we celebrate Pentecost, on Sunday, we celebrate the Savior's unifying presence in the world. He has brought order to chaotic human turmoil through his life and mission. He now sends the Holy Spirit upon the apostles to unify the beginning of the Church. This is a new dawn on the old story. It is the final act in the work of salvation history. Jesus has come to make all things new, restoring original peace to the world.

In the aftermath of his resurrection and subsequent ascension, Jesus now sends the Holy Spirit to the upper room, **"And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim."**

The Spirit has not undone the differences in speech; rather what has changed is the message. Jesus has brought to the world the message of eternal life. A broken world has been reconciled to God once and for all. This is the message of the gospel, a universal language, understood by and meant for all. It is the message of God's love, forgiveness and mercy.

Jesus says to us today **"Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."** We received this Holy Spirit at baptism. We have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel of God's love, forgiveness and mercy to all we meet. This is our commission. It is our Happy Birthday to Mother Church. It is our gratitude to God's Divine providence.

Blessings!


Sue Schettler