

Pentecost 2011

Fr. Robert, VerEecke, S.J.

The other day I stopped at a gas station to get a “fill up.” When I pulled in, I noticed all the pumps were full-serve. Oh, I groaned. I’m going to have to pay more. No options here. Well, what to my surprise was the fact that you not only got full serve, you didn’t have to get out of your car, but the price was a bargain: \$3.70 a gallon. Full service at a bargain price. Wow! Was I surprised. Now that sounds like Pentecost! Full service and a bargain!

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. Pentecost. A day filled with all sorts of surprises. Those disciples were told to wait in the upper room for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the Risen Jesus, God’s Holy Spirit, but they didn’t know what the Spirit would feel like or what the Spirit would impel them to do. So they waited, a community of men and women in prayer, with great expectations. After all, they had experienced the Risen Jesus, the one who had been crucified, raised from the dead, not as some ghostly apparition but as the flesh and blood Jesus they had known and loved before his death. They couldn’t really find words to describe this Jesus. He was like... He appeared to be.... He was...no, he is... he is... They were scrambling to find the words. At a loss for words! (I’m sure we all know that feeling of being at a loss for words).

So what could possibly be more thrilling, more heart-poundingly exciting than an encounter with the Risen Jesus? These men and women who had been thrown into confusion and grief and profound disappointment had already been stunned, shocked, overjoyed by the first hands and feet experience of the Risen Jesus and they were told that there was more to come. What could possibly “fill them up” more?

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And they are taken by surprise. The Room where they were was filled with a driving wind (MUSICAL CUE) and a deafening noise that filled the whole room (MUSICAL CUE). Where they couldn’t believe their eyes, in the encounter with the Risen Jesus. Now they couldn’t believe their ears. The sound that filled the room. What did they hear? Could it have been: Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord, Jesus is lord. And they were no longer at a loss for words. They began to speak boldly, proclaiming God’s work, praising God, expanding outward, bursting with joy, filing the streets, singing and dancing. Jesus is Lord. The world is

turned upside down. Death no longer rules. And we who have been baptized and filled with his Spirit have nothing to fear.

So how am I doing so far? On this very bleak, rainy, spirit-less day, are you catching on? Are my words contagious? Do they help you feel like the Spirit is renewing the face of the earth, recreating us in the image of Jesus? Are my words helping you to feel filled up, charged up, on fire? I know that I'm working overtime this morning since our Pentecost celebration was supposed to look and feel very different today. We had big plans for today. We had mariachi bands coming, a big tent outside so you good people could move from the inside to the outside and make some connections, meet and greet and speak with your brothers and sisters and Christ. That's why you have those gifts of the spirit cards which I'll say more about in a minute. So we're trying to "make the best of it."

And after all that's what Pentecost is about: making the best of it. WE have received the BEST! Being surprised by the many ways God's spirit renews and refreshes us, lifts our feeble spirits even when they we weary, even when we are achingly disappointed by life. The Spirit has his/her/its ways of opening our minds and hearts. The Spirit gifts us with those gifts you have in your hands.

I now invite you to look at the cards you were given when you entered the church. On them are the gifts of the spirit. But you need to find your match! Some of you have the small cards that give you the clue or a hint of the gift of the Spirit that is yours. Someone else has the same image on a larger card and they can reveal to you your gift. No it's not exactly match.com but it illustrates how we need each other to reveal and help us understand these very special gifts of the Spirit. Following the liturgy you are invited to come downstairs for refreshments and the refreshing Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Full service and better than a bargain! These gifts are free, abundant and overflowing. Happy Pentecost!