

### Revival 3 “The Holy Spirit – Called To Be Church!”

*Leader:* In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All: **Amen.**

*Leader:* Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful

All: **And kindle in them the fire of your love.**

*Leader:* Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created

All. **And You shall renew the face of the earth.**

*Leader:* Let us pray.

All: **O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.**

A Reading from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. 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. Now there were [many people] from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, “What does this mean?” But others said, scoffing, “They have had too much new wine.”

The Word of the Lord.

You rarely hear that last verse from this reading of Acts chapter 2. I left it in there because it is entertaining. However, it also speaks to how, from the very beginning of the Church at Pentecost, the culture in which we live loves to scoff at us and sow doubt. My friends, Revival began by exploring how God exists, why he made us and that he indeed loves us. At our last Revival, our focus was on Jesus and how, in the fullness of time, God sent us his only Son as our savior from the power of sin and death. Last week, we celebrated that Jesus knows us, he loves us, and that he saves us from the brokenness that is inside of each and every one of us.

During the last supper in the Gospel of St. John, before Jesus’ crucifixion, Jesus gave them his last will and testament summarizing everything that he taught them. During this discourse, probably while drying his hands after washing their feet, he says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees

nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.” Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles tonight recounts for us the day when it actually happened. For us, the Holy Spirit is available to us every day in so many ways but especially through the sacraments and most especially in the Sacrament of Confirmation when we are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit once and forever.

What is a great way of understanding Pentecost? I shared with you last time that Genesis has more than one story describing humanity’s downfall, the most famous being Adam and Eve. However, there is another story about the Tower of Babel. You may recall it. It speaks of a kingdom of one people whose technology was so impressive that they were able to build a tower high into sky, higher than any building has ever been built, perhaps even taller than a mountain. This tower symbolized this kingdom’s belief that they had grown so far technologically that they saw themselves on equal footing as God, perhaps even greater than God. Does that sound like a culture any of us know? There is a fun poem that describes all of this. It goes: “Their tower's impressive statistics pleased architects, boosters and mystics. But their excess of pride caused the Lord to decide it was time that they studied linguistics.”

The great kingdom of course was Babel. Babel is where we get the word “babbling” from because the people of this kingdom woke up one day and discovered they were all speaking different languages and couldn’t understand each other anymore. It is a story about original sin, about how our inclination to egotism can get in the way of a loving relationship with God and others. What happened at Babel is not far off the mark from what we experience in our world today. Everyone who has suffered a broken relationship, either with a parent, child, spouse, classmates, co-workers, and this list goes on, we all share a similar experience. When communication breaks down, when communication turns into babbling, relationships break down quickly. We can see this happen at home. We can see this happen in school. We can see that at work. We never see communication breakdowns in our country, right? From our city streets to the halls of Congress to the United Nations, we see this and experience the effects of this every day. You see, when communication breaks down between people, even if all parties are speaking the same language and with perfect grammar; sin nevertheless reduces us to babbling: Everyone talking at each other with no body understanding a single word.

What is the answer to the curse of Babel? The answer to Babel is what happened on the day of Pentecost! On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples like fire. On Pentecost, all present were able to speak in hundreds of different languages, mirroring Babel, but with one important difference. They could understand each other. They became one people regardless of what language they spoke. A fitting way of appreciating this miracle of the Holy Spirit is attending a mass in another country during a vacation or going to St. Peter’s Square in Rome or something similar. At Papal celebrations, you might have a dozen or more languages represented among the people present for the liturgy and yet everyone somehow understands each other. Saint Vincent de Paul is one of the most diverse parishes in the Archdiocese with many different cultures represented and yet we are one community of faith. This is in large part what the word “Church” means. The word Church comes from the word “ecclesia”. Ecclesia

literally means “Assembly”. The Church is the People of God “assembled” together regardless of which country you were born in. We are in this thing together.

My friends, the root of all the problems in our world usually boil down to an inability to communicate with each other, to truly listen and hear each other, and sincerely desire what is best for each other. That’s as fitting a description of original sin as any. Sin makes individuals and nations selfish, causing us to turn our eyes away from the suffering of others in the world around us. It is therefore very interesting that the bible describes God in such a radically opposite way.

You see, the bible speaks of God as Three Persons and yet One God. How can that be? One plus one plus one = wait, what? The reason why Father, Son and Holy Spirit are One, borrowing now from St. Augustine (and a pinch of Bishop Barron), is because the Father eternally forgets himself out of love for his Son. The Son eternally forgets himself out of love for the Father. The Holy Spirit manifests himself as the love that processes forth from Father and Son (in Latin, *filioque*, for those taking notes). That love processing forth from Father and Son is creative. It is why we are here. What has been revealed to us is a dynamic monotheism not a static one. The communication between the three Persons of the Godhead is so perfect that, when you consider God lives in an eternal “now”, we can only understand Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one God, three Persons with one divine nature. This is what we mean when we say they are consubstantial with each other and therefore one. What does the Triune God that has been revealed to us want for us? God made us so that we can freely know him, freely love him so to become truly one with Him, forever. That is salvation, becoming one with God who loves us.

What is the Devil’s game? The Devil wants to separate us from God and isolate us by destroying our relationships. Like I said last time, you if don’t believe in the Devil, you are making a mistake. God also created the angels to have free will and some of them use that freedom poorly, just as we do. The word Devil comes from the Greek word *diabolos*. It is a word that literally means “to throw apart and to scatter”. Let me tell you how he goes about it. He goes about this is by first tempting us to sin just as he tempted Jesus in the desert. Unlike Jesus, we fall for it sometimes. What comes next? After he laughs at us, he then proceeds to accuse us over and over, telling us that we are no good, telling us that God doesn’t love us anymore and that we don’t deserve to be loved by others anymore. He puts thoughts in our head like, why bother going to church anymore because I am no good. Does any of this sound familiar? Whenever you hear that voice, that’s the Devil talking. Remind yourself next time when you hear the voice of “the accuser” speaking in your head. That isn’t to say we can’t do that to ourselves. It’s just that the Devil has a way of taking it to an unhealthy level.

Who is the Holy Spirit? Jesus calls the Holy Spirit our Advocate. Think about what that word means. The Holy Spirit knows everything about us. He knows us better than we do. The Spirit knows everything that is good about us and every one of our shortcomings. However, the voice of the Holy Spirit never accuses us. He never accuses us. Quite the contrary, he defends us because he is, by our standards, irrational in his love for us. The Holy Spirit is irrational when it comes to loving us. He loves us infinitely more than we can ever love ourselves, especially in our worst moments. My friends, learn to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit in your heart. Learn to

hear his voice. Follow the voice that constantly loves us back to Jesus, who died for us so that we may be one with God forever.

My friends, the Holy Spirit calls us away from our isolation and loneliness so to become a member of his body the Church like at Pentecost. You see, the Devil wants us to be isolated and lonely. The Holy Spirit therefore calls us to community. At the heart of the word communication are the concepts of community and communion. Do you see it? Yes, Jesus left the ninety-nine sheep for the one. Jesus met the man born blind and the woman at the well in their isolation. How does every one of those stories end? They all end with them following and at times being carried by Jesus back to the flock, back into the community, back into the Church.

A basic way to understand this is, if you had to travel over a dark and stormy ocean, are you better off in big boat supported by community watching out for each other and caring for each other or are you better off in that ocean in your own little canoe? Obviously, you are better off making that journey overseas in a community. Just as God called his Chosen People to make the journey together through the desert as a community, Jesus says clearly in the Gospel of St. Matthew to Simon, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” Peter skips the boat that will never sink. Is everyone on this boat perfect? No. We are all sinners in need of Christ’s redemption. We are all called to conversion and discipleship. However, no matter how many storms we encounter on the ocean to everlasting life, we know the Barque of Peter will make it there. Jesus said so. We are far better off together than by ourselves. We come to Church to give God praise and be filled with grace. We also come to Church because our presence here is medicine to the other people around us because we are in this thing together.

Last week, we reflected on the Good News that Jesus knows you, Jesus loves you and Jesus saves you. If there is one “message” I hope you will remember tonight it is this. The Holy Spirit calls us, the Holy Spirit defends us, and the Holy Spirit leads us. Like last time, I could say “Holy Spirit” and you could respond “Calls Us”. I could then say, “Holy Spirit” again and you could respond “Defends Us”. I could then say “Holy Spirit” a third time and you could respond, “Leads Us”. Let’s give that a try. The Holy Spirit “Calls Us”. The Holy Spirit “Defends Us”. The Holy Spirit “Leads Us”. Let’s see who is louder. North side: The Holy Spirit “Calls Us”. The Holy Spirit “Defends Us”. The Holy Spirit “Leads Us”. South side: The Holy Spirit “Calls Us”. The Holy Spirit “Defends Us”. The Holy Spirit “Leads Us”. Together with conviction: The Holy Spirit “Calls Us”. The Holy Spirit “Defends Us”. The Holy Spirit “Leads Us”. Believe it. Believe it. Believe it.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. Amen.

### Guidance for the rest of the evening

At this time, I get to guide you through the rest of this evening. Like last time, we will begin with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. It is an activity we call “adoration”. We believe Jesus is truly present in the Holy Eucharist and this is an opportunity to commune with Him.

Soon after we begin adoration, I will then invite our young people enrolled for our Revival small groups to quietly move in the direction of their group leaders. Notice the color on your name tags correspond to the color of the flags of your group leaders. There is no expectation other than being present; however, you are welcome to participate. The questions for conversation are on the handout. There are no wrong answers. The rest of us will stay and pray for them.

The main reason for these circles however is just an opportunity to offer a prayer at the end for whatever it is you are asking of God right now. You will be invited to light a candle representing that prayer and to bring that candle to place on the altar, to Jesus. After you put the candle on the altar, in reverence consider genuflecting, making the sign of the cross, and then pray back at your seat for the others. I invite our group leaders to please be back here by 7:50. The evening will wrap up shortly thereafter with prayer and benediction. My heartfelt gratitude to all of you for being here tonight. Please stand.