



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

PENTECOST SUNDAY
June 4, 2017



Introduction to the Word:

Ten years before Confederation on September 7, 1857 the cornerstone of the Church of St Mary of the Visitation was laid. Back then, what is today Hespeler, was known as New Hope, and that is what early Catholic families had as they gathered initially in homes as priests from the Church of Our Lady in Guelph came to celebrate Mass and offer the Sacraments. They had a New Hope that a Church could be built for them in Hespeler one day and that they would have a priest who could serve them. It was Pentecost.

Everyone has a Pentecost – the Feast we celebrate today – and for our parish ours happened differently than that described in the Gospel of today and yet in some respects in much the same manner.

The Great Feast of Pentecost brings to a conclusion the Easter. Having kept our eyes on the road, we now look forward to our vision as Disciples of the Risen Lord – this is our defining moment.

Warm Up Activity:

Is there an experience in your life that you consider 'a defining moment' or a 'turning point'? Perhaps, if you emigrated, it might be the day you set foot in your newly chosen country. Or, it could be your university or college experience, or the day of your marriage, or your first job, or the birth of your first child, or the day a particular loved one passed away.

What did that moment in your life signify for you?

Was it a positive or negative significance and memory?

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

Lord Jesus, For the times I have not been open to the Holy Spirit **Lord, have mercy**
Christ Jesus, For doubting your grace and the power of your Spirit, **Christ, have mercy**
Lord Jesus, For not celebrating your presence in my life, and that of your Holy Spirit **Lord, have mercy**

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

First Reading (Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11)

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 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 devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Second Reading (First Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians 7:12-15)

Brothers and sisters: No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

Gospel (John 20:19-23)

A reading from the holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

On the evening of the first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

It is that significant day—that 'defining moment' or 'turning point' in the life of the disciples. Jesus had been crucified, and mysteriously risen from the dead, and had appeared to them on various occasions. They not only saw Him, and heard Him, but touched Him, and even ate with Him. He was indeed risen, and present. Suddenly, with the mysterious coming of the Holy Spirit, in the form of tongues of fire, their lives were transformed yet again. They were no longer behind "locked doors ... for fear of the authorities". Rather, they were filled with courage and began praising God and witnessing to the risen Lord in a multitude of languages, languages unknown to them. The many international visitors in Jerusalem received these words of praise in their own language, confounding them as to how these Galileans could speak their language. The Spirit revealed itself through this 'gift'. The Church had begun! The mission of Jesus Christ would continue through these disciples of the Lord!

In the Ascension we learn that Jesus withdraws, so that we might ourselves be sent out to make Him present in the world. At Pentecost we rejoice in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, whom we receive at Baptism and Confirmation and through whom as disciples of Jesus we proclaim the Kingdom of the Heavenly Father. Pentecost comes because all of us need a beginning - but we need one that has His guidance and inspiration - especially in our mission of discipleship.

As we have during the Easter Season been travelling with our Eyes on the Road, we have found that our encounters with Christ, who not only invited with the words Come and See - but sent His Disciples forth with the words Go and Tell - equally promised that He would be with them to the end of the age.

Therefore as we looked at last week, what we are about is not just to admire Jesus (like a fan club), but to resemble Jesus (like faith filled Disciples). That Jesus has chosen us to reflect or mirror who He is to our world and that this done best not by winning people over with



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

persuasion that we are right, but by the uniqueness of who we are in action and deed that models a discipleship of truth. This is why the first Pentecost found the Apostles and Disciples speaking in the language of the people – various languages – languages of their day.

Pentecost becomes a time for us as a Church and a parish to look back gratefully to the saintly example of those who have gone before us, and learn from them as we seek in our own day to proclaim the Kingdom of God, fulfilling the great commission that inspired them: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28: 19-20)

The vision in our first reading both challenges and encourages the Church, and each individual disciple. It is the vision of the New Jerusalem. It is the challenge which Jesus gives to His disciples to faithfulness in a time of challenges. The New Jerusalem sets the standard. Those before us in this parish – priest and laity alike – said the current is not enough – we must seek to be a light on a hill top – we wish our faith to grow.

Our great challenge in witnessing to the New Jerusalem today– the place we all seek to go - is that our world lives at times in discord with our mission as disciples of Jesus. Our world is loud and restless, and so we need to become a place where those who come searching may find a home – and may in the silence of our example, finding the peace who is Christ.

The more we center our lives as individuals and as a parish upon Christ, in the silence of prayer, trusting in divine providence, the more fruitful we will be in our life of discipleship. It is when we faithfully on His day, no matter the season, enter the temple of God, and in silent personal prayer and in the intimate encounter with Christ in word and sacrament, and especially in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, and in Eucharistic Adoration.

This is what our early pioneers in this parish desired – a temple not for the sake of a building – but for the sake a community gathering to be able to worship and lead others to help build the Kingdom of God and prepare the New Jerusalem.

In this world in which God has placed us, so many seek a home – even at times when it was the search for candy that brought them. But as people who have inherited a Pentecost; we must go deep into the silent encounter with God.

We as a church are that temple, and from that temple we are sent out with joyful boldness to bring the healing experience of the Good News of Christ to the world in which God has placed us.

St. Augustine, who saw the City of Man crumble before his eyes, but whose heart was set on Jerusalem, the City of God, summed up our Christian disposition in words “our hearts are restless, until they rest in thee O Lord.” So too – our parish – a product of Pentecost – must always be a place that helps restless hearts find a home.



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: *(15-20 minutes)*

Who in your life led you to this day allowed you to know the Lord?

Who in your life opened doors of welcome, led you to the Eucharist, saw by example to evangelize, seeks by steps to be faithful that brought you today?

Our parish values adopted in 2012 help guide our mission as a parish – how does your small group help with each? Remember nothing grows in a silo but sanctity spring forth in community.

Eucharistic Spirituality
Hospitality and Welcome
Evangelization
Faithfulness to Who God Made Us To Be

As we conclude the Easter Season and our Eyes on the Road Message series, what is one or two nuggets that you take with you as you move forward?

Intercessions:

Leader: Our response: Lord Hear us

- For Pope Francis: may God strengthen him in his apostolic ministry as the successor of Peter and the shepherd of Christ's faithful people here on earth. We pray to the Lord.
- For the young people of the parish may they remain close to the Lord and may our example lead them to the practice of the faith among us. We pray to the Lord.
- For parents who are preparing for the baptism of their child: may they be the best teachers of their child in the ways of faith by the good example that they offer. We pray to the Lord.
- For those from our parish community considering a Vocation to priesthood and religious life. For our two seminarians Hayden and Robin. May they experience the love of the Risen Lord as they seek to discern His will for their lives. We pray to the Lord.
- For the young people of our parish preparing to go to Steubenville this summer and those who will participate at Camp Brebeuf. We pray to the Lord.
- For areas of the world in need, especially in Kenya and in Haiti. May our prayers and support aide them and bring them closer to Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- For all who have died, as well as for all the intentions recorded in the parish book of prayer. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray:
Hail Mary



SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and “outreach” to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

- Prayerfully consider ways that your group and our parish could grow at welcoming others, help those who are restless to find a home.
- Prayerfully talk about the summer plans for your group. Heart to Home editions conclude at the end of June – but your group can continue to meet – how can we help?
- Spend time as a group in Eucharistic Adoration – prayer for our shepherds in the Church

Let us pray (together)

O God, who by the mystery of this feast,
sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation,
pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth
and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed,
fill now once more the hearts of believers. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Heart to Home, copyright © 2017 by Father F. Freitas. It is **copyrighted and cannot be published without permission of the author**. The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version