

## Pentecost 2018

Fr. Mo-ped is back. I still marvel at how the Holy Spirit spreads God's good news around the world. It's always done through people who are willing to say yes to God and then allowing the Holy Spirit to use them and work through them.

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!'

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!'

Sometimes we may feel like the Holy Spirit is pushing us into something, but that's not how God works. God only proposes, He never imposes. He doesn't incite, but He does invite.

Today is the solemnity of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection when Jesus sends His replacement to guide and direct us until He returns to collect us.

This past Wednesday evening we invited the parish to celebrate the feast Day of our patron SJN with a mass and a potluck.

It was one of the most amazing spreads of food I've ever seen.

There were dishes from Germany, Italy, India, Mexican, Vietnam, Czech, and Scottish, who by the way tied for the best traditional dress.

It almost sounds like the second reading today, they were from Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 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.

Well Wednesday night we all spoke the same language, we all spoke good eats!

It was a full Marian Hall that represented our parish family who have come from all over the world in the last 129 years, to make this their parish home.

It was a big event, not quite as big as the royal wedding.

Next year it will be even bigger since our parish will be celebrating 130 years.

It really is a wonder How a little community of Czech farmers and laborers can start a little mission church and then grow into what it is today?

During our initial capital campaign interviews and visits, church members keep saying that although we are nearly 1300 registered families, it still feels like a close family parish.

Looking back through parish directories over the past several decades, it's been fun to see what some of you looked like in the 60's 70's and 80's.

Many families have been faithful to this parish for 3,4,5 generations. Your faithfulness has given a sense of stability and direction over the years.

Your families have had ups and downs. This church and school has had ups and downs, this town and state has had ups and downs.

But look at where we are now as a parish. Look at what all has been done here in the last 60 years.

Built a new church on this hill in 1961, which was on the far edge of town. Built a school right about the same time, and a new Rectory.

Then in the late 90's you built this new church, which more than doubled the seating capacity, you built a wonderful Parish Activity Center, renovated a new parish hall, Marian hall.

And now we are about to build a new discipleship center, middle school and tornado shelter.

How does a little community with a few immigrant farming families set a parish on a trajectory that can accomplish so much?

Let's see how they did it about 1,980 years ago.

At the feasts of Pentecost there was a city wide holiday celebrating the wheat harvest and other first fruits of the season.

Jerusalem was jam packed with not only Jews, but all kinds of merchants, business entrepreneurs, traders, craftsman from all over the Middle East, Far East, North Africa, east Europe,

It was big business, a time when sales promotions, bargaining and trade could put the family business in the Black until the next year.

Of course no one spoke a common language.

They only language that they had in common was commerce.

So u can imagine what that must have been like.

Of course there were many folks there especially many Jews who had heard of Jesus and believed in Him and that He was the messiah.

So maybe some converts also had on their agenda to talk about Him in the process of the sales promotion, if it happened to come up in conversation.

But that probably was not the priority at that time.

Then something strange happened. Not since the tower of Babylon in about 1100 BC, was there a common language where everyone could understand each other.

You remember that they wanted to build an edifice to impress.

A tower taller than anything else in the history of the world.

But because it was all about them, building up their ego instead of about building the kingdom of God, the Lord caused them to not be able to understand each other and so the building came to a halt.

That's what happens when we make things about ourselves.

We stop progressing.

When we stop trying to understand and support one another and start taking things personally then life becomes stagnant and we become suspicious of each other.

They say if you speak more than two languages your multi lingual. If you speak two languages ur bilingual and if you just speak one language, then you're an American.

Sr. BJ says that understanding the homeless is speaking in a different tongue.

The more we try to really listen and hear and understand each other, and build each other up, the more it becomes about God and less about ourselves.

That's when we really start building, Bridging and Being the kingdom of God.

Gods kingdom is about surprises and abundance.

When we are tempted into thinking that The Lord is a God of scarcity rather than a God of abundance, then we may be trying to build our own empire rather than Gods kingdom.

But When our faith is in a God that is greater than ourselves then we get to do things greater than ourselves.

That's what Pentecost did.

It gave the people a rush of confidence and enthusiasm.

They started thinking bigger than just themselves and started understanding each other for a greater cause. It wasn't about them just making a profit but it was about becoming a prophet, a prophet on a mission for Christ.

So how do we know, if what we are doing is for selfish reasons or if what we are doing is for the Lord?

St. Paul spells it out.  
if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.  
Guidance under the Spirit is good. Guidance under the old law is ego driven.

The ego or the old law Are works of the flesh: immorality, impurity, lust, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like.  
I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

That's what builds a parish. Patience, kindness, generosity, self-control. That's what those first immigrant farmers understood.  
They weren't building a church just for themselves. They were building a parish for future generations.

For us. You and I have inherited their trust, their belief in a God of abundance not a the Lord of scarcity.

As this capital campaign begins to unfold over these next few months, we have an incredible opportunity to speak about a future that is bigger than ourselves.  
To look at what God has built through those on whose shoulders we now stand upon,  
and now for us to envision with optimism what is possible ahead of us.

How do we do that?

By learning to understanding each other, not through a common language that we speak, but through the language of charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

What language do people hear me speaking?