

Father Tom's Homily - PENTECOST 2020

I would like to share about two gifts of the Holy Spirit today; wisdom and healing. The gift of wisdom does not mean that we know everything and have a solution for everything, because "Wisdom is the art of good living". Personally to me, wisdom means to be able to evaluate the situations which we are facing with the mind and heart of God. My parents had 11 children. During the dreadful and severe drought in 1973, we had very limited supply of food and hardly enough to feed five kids for a week. Our family only had one meal a day. My mum, with her infinite wisdom, had put a lot of chilli to make our meals spicy so that it will force us to drink a lot of water which filled us up quickly. To my mother, this was the only way to contain the situation for her young and hungry family. I was a teenager then and was curious HOW and WHY my mother did what she did. I asked her, "Mum, how did you endure the drought, day after day, having 11 kids with empty bellies?" In her gentle voice, she replied, "I did my best and God did the rest". Mum's wisdom! I frequently recall these wise words especially when I encounter challenging situations. Do your best and God will do the rest. Similarly, the gift of healing is very much needed; be it physical, emotional or spiritual. We are all called and gifted to bring healing to one another, through our prayers. God desires to do the rest for all of us, if we do our best for others. At times, we think God is somewhere far away. In fact, God is always present within us; now, today, through the gift of the Spirit. The feast of Pentecost reminds us of the holistic truth; to be aware of the Lord's presence - his real presence - through the Holy Spirit. He is present

within us and around us when we drive, eat, work, play, when we get up in the morning and go to bed at night, and when we sleep. What an amazing gift of the Spirit to live by. The Holy Spirit does not come upon us simply in one flash, and then disappear. In John's Gospel today, the very first thing the Risen Lord does when he appears to his disciples is that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." The Spirit is with us in every sacrament; and keeps coming to us and transforming us. Most of all, the Spirit is poured upon us in the Eucharistic celebration. Which part of the Mass? It is during the Eucharistic prayer, when the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine and prays, "Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them like the dewfall, so that they may become for us the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." Take this all of you, and eat of it ... for this is MY BODY which will be given up for you. Similarly ... Take this all of you, and drink from it ... for this is the chalice of MY BLOOD ... do this ... in memory of me. After these words of consecration, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ. This Pentecost, we set up these modestly home-made wooden statues of the apostles, praying with Mother Mary. The tongues of fire that appeared in the Upper Room infused their hearts and minds with charisma and gifts required for their vital mission of evangelizing the world: preaching, healing and serving the people of God. The Holy Spirit effected their transformation into Christ. Let us pray today for the entire Church that the Holy Spirit will be more evident in our lives and in the world.