

The Sunday Homily for Pentecost – May 20, 2018

A wise scholarly priest once said: most people in a catholic parish live good moral lives, yet they are not living mature Christian spiritual lives.

They do not take advantage of the spiritual software that comes with Pentecost, Jesus sending the same spirit that led him. So they do not see Jesus more clearly in their lives...love him more dearly...and follow him more nearly.

How can we? How can you and I go to the next level, go beyond just living good moral lives?

We might begin by answering this question. If you handed Jesus a cell phone would he know how to use it?

If you answer yes...you might be inclined to put Jesus too quickly on a pedestal. Then you don't have to imitate him, pattern your life on his life, live a mature Christian spiritual life.

If you answer no, he would not know how to use a cell phone, you might be more inclined to follow him, and live a mature Christian spiritual life.

You would believe that just because Jesus was God it did not make it any easier for him to be human. And that would be absolutely correct.

Jesus was a Jewish man of his culture, his time, with all the limitations of that culture and time. They did not have technology at the time of Jesus.

If before the Easter Resurrection, the Jesus who walked the earth was standing there, you would have to teach him how to use a cell phone.... or a computer...or drive a car. As someone taught you and me.

The point is Jesus learned the same way as you and I learn....except as his life developed ...as he matured through adolescence , grew into young adulthood, as he grew into manhood, in wisdom, age and grace.

His primary most important teacher was the sacred spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. We might want to think that Jesus never had doubts.....he did.

We might want to think that trust in the heavenly father came automatic for Jesus, it didn't.

As the novelist Alice Walker wrote: "Sometimes Jesus found it hard to be Jesus".

We don't give him any honor by calling Jesus Lord , of he is not at that same time our brother.

Why is this important.....for living a spiritual life as well as a good moral life. Well look at this cross. You see Jesus holding out a dove symbolizing that spirit that led him.

This is not a pious symbol....Jesus is saying "I could not have done it without this....and neither can you. That is the surprising shock of Pentecost ...Jesus was a spirit led man....and he gives that same sacred spirit that led his life.....the Holy Spirit.

You know trying to live a mature Christian life without the Holy Spirit is like trying to imagine a teenager without a cell phone. Some of us are able to check our e-mail five times a day.....but not check the spiritual software Jesus handed onto us.

We will say we were taught the gifts of the holy spirit; Wisdom, understanding, counsel..... fortitude, knowledge, piety, reverence for the Lord.... We will say...“We were told about the Holy Spirit in our religion classes, but that’s about all. We have not seen a trace of these gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives”.

But they are thereand here is how to check in on the spiritual software that Jesus depended on for his life.

It’s called walking toward or away from sun. If the sun is behind you and you start walking away with the sun at your back.....where does your shadow fall? It falls in front of you.

When you turn your back on God’s spirit in your life, life seems all up to you...seems dark and hopeless, you feel like a guy with a peg leg climbing a flight of stairs.

You end up agitated, hard to be with, not at home in your own skin.

When you walk toward the sun...where does your shadow fall? It falls behind you. When you are walking toward God....and his values, his attitude, his way of looking at the situation....the relationship...person

life seems more hopeful, not as agitated, easier to be with. The challenges are still there but your companion is Christ...not just your own ego.

You then give yourself a chance to live out those seven gifts of Jesus spirit. My guess is you might already have had experience living the Holy Spirit in your life.

For example: Have you ever felt depressed or terrified....yet somehow found within yourself the strength to go on...not knowing where that strength came from?

Have you ever met someone to care for you and wonder why that love came into your life?

Have you ever met someone in life who suffered and yet their spirit was not broken or bitter?

Have you ever seen someone remain faithful to the teachings of their conscience despite the cost?

Have you ever felt the power of the forces of hatred and greed in your human heart and wondered how they are held in check?

Have you ever succeed without knowing how you broke out of a sinful, selfish lifestyle?

Perhaps in all of these experiences, you were living a spiritual life. Perhaps in these and other events you were sensing Pentecost happening in your life.....

Could it be that by paying attention to the same sacred spirit that led Jesus you and I may see Jesus more clearly....love him more dearly...and follow him more nearly.