

+ J. M. J.

I think some well meaning people were preparing me last week. Why, I'm not sure, but more than a couple of people after Mass noted the same thing. In Fr. Mark's absence I didn't manage to burn the place down. You can imagine my joy on Monday when I discovered a pool of water on the kitchen floor. For the next five days I didn't have access to the kitchen sink or dishwasher as the drain was being fixed. I had taken for granted this simple convenience that every one of us has in our homes, and when it was gone I was more than a little miffed.

Today as we contemplate the Holy Spirit we can quickly realize that we take for granted the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Holy Spirit do?

The preface for today reminds us that the Father's sending of the Holy Spirit brings the paschal mystery or the saving work of Jesus to its completion. Recall Jesus' words. **"It is better for you that I go"** (John 16:7). Everything that Jesus did was to show us God's love and reconcile us with God through the forgiveness of sins, but as Jesus walked this earth he had the same physical limitations as you and I. He could only be in one place at one time. His voice could only carry so far, so there would be a limit to the size of the crowd he could address. We also know from the Gospel that there was an issue of feeding those numerous people that came to be with him.

The Holy Spirit who is God takes Jesus and puts Jesus in each of us. This is done primarily in the sacraments. In baptism we receive the life of the trinity. In the Eucharist we receive the body of Christ so that we may become that which we eat. In the sacrament of reconciliation we receive Jesus who comes and forgives our sins. The sacraments are the fullest expression and a guarantee of us being configured to Christ, but the Holy Spirit also puts Jesus in us when we pray, when others pray for us, etc. Here's the consequence. If we receive the gift, we should look an awful lot like Jesus. We should go through our day with the love that Jesus demonstrated to the world. We then ask ourselves, do others see us as

Jesus. Can our friends, our children, our spouse, our parents, our coworkers, even our enemies, see Jesus in us? If they cannot, perhaps we are taking the Holy Spirit for granted.

The Holy Spirit unifies. St. Paul helps us understand this in the second reading. As we receive the sacraments, foremost in the Eucharist, we are made into the one Body of Christ. The main quality to unity or oneness is that the Body cannot be divided or separated. Whereas sin separates the Holy Spirit brings us together. The Holy Spirit leads us to forgiveness and to be bold enough to say I'm sorry first even if the other person is undeserving, hurt us first, or whatever. How can we enjoy the unity of heaven unless we are able to forgive and love first, hopefully here on earth?

Finally, Isaiah described the attributes that would characterize the messiah. They are fear of the Lord, piety, knowledge, fortitude, counsel, understanding, and wisdom. Of course we know these as the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Because they are of Christ, when the Holy Spirit puts Christ in us, we receive them as well: Fear of the Lord that we may fear doing anything that puts us at a distance from God, piety that we may love God and be joyful at whatever gives God glory,<sup>1</sup> knowledge that we may discover the path to heaven and avoid pitfalls, fortitude that we may have the strength to do what is right, counsel that we may be able to discern what actions to perform,<sup>2</sup> understanding that we may be able to intellectually grasp the tenets of our faith, and wisdom that we may see everything of this world in relation to the next as God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sees them.

Today as we contemplate the mystery of Pentecost, let us not forget the gift of the Holy Spirit that we have. We ask to each day receive Christ and be changed to be more like him. We ask to be made one and reconciled with each member of the Christian family. We ask to receive whatever gift we need most in our lives. When Jesus told us to ask and we would receive, he then told us to ask for the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07409a.htm)

<sup>2</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* II-II, 52, 1.

Let us then boldly ask the Holy Spirit to come into our lives and change us just as the apostles and Christians throughout the ages have been filled with the Holy Spirit.