**Homily for Pentecost**(6/9/2019)

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 There are three fundamental truths about religion: First, the Jewish don’t recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and second, Protestants don’t recognize the Pope as the Vicar of Christ, and third, Baptists don’t recognize each other at the bar on Saturday nights.

 Today, we celebrate the great solemnity of Pentecost. Pentecost, the ‘birthday of the Church,’ is a splendid feast of the Church year. Only twice in the Bible, God reveals Himself in wind and fire. The first time, in the Old Testament, with lightening and thunder on Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the Law.

 The Jewish still continues to celebrate receiving the Law of Moses on Pentecost, fifty days after Passover. Pentecost means the ‘fiftieth day.’

 We, Christians, celebrate Pentecost fifty days after Easter Sunday. The fifty days after Easter, when Jesus was ascended into heaven, He gave us the Holy Spirit. Speaking with wind and fire a second time, God gave us a new Law, the Law of love, and filled His disciples with the Holy Spirit, and established a new Church. It was the new beginning of the salvation history.

 There was the Holy Spirit already before Pentecost. We know the Spirit of God hovered over the waters in Genesis, the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets in the Old Testament, and Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

 But, after Pentecost, now the Holy Spirit is given not just to the kings or prophets or special person, but to the whole Church, to every Christian, and to each one of us. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to save all of us.

 So, Pentecost is not just about a supernatural event on an afternoon in Jerusalem long time ago. It is life of every one of us. It is our own story about journey of faith. Remember. Each one of us received the Holy Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation to enable us to live a new way of life: a life of love, peace, joy, and righteousness.

 The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love and grace of God, and He gives us the strength and courage. It is our Pentecost in our lives.

 Jesus says to us, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Then, He adds, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved.” This is who we are. This is what we do.

 After His Ascension, Jesus left to heaven. But, we know that the story didn’t end there. Jesus wants to share Heaven’s glory with us. Heaven is our final destination. Jesus showed our future glory in His Ascension.

 But, the problem is that we are very weak. We stumble or get diverted, or we get weary and stop moving forward to heaven. Sometimes, we stop walking for our journey to heaven. And, often we lose the way to heaven. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit has been given to us.

 By the power of the Holy Spirit, God is with us, takes care of us, and leads us to heaven. It is God’s love and His promise.

 So, Pentecost means that God is close to us, and His Spirit is with us always. We all have received the Holy Spirit. Whatever happens in our lives, whatever ways we may travel, the Holy Spirit is present with us as conscience, as repentance, as an inner moral compass, as the desire to forgiveness, as an urge to pray, as an encouragement to love and hope, and as the right direction for the future.

 We know and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. When we try to love and forgive others, when we try to unite rather than divide, when we proclaim and live the Gospel, when we open our hearts in prayer, when we make wise decisions, when we are faithful to our vows and promises, when we appreciate the majesty of God’s presence, we are within the Holy Spirit.

 We know the Spirit of God is with us. We are always in God’s love and care. The Holy Spirit is our personal link to what counts, our link to what is right, our personal link to God. The Lord Jesus offers each one of us the gift and power of the Holy Spirit.

 He wants to make our faith strong, give us hope that endures, and a love that never grows cold. He never refuses to give His Spirit to those who ask with expectant faith.

 Today, we say with believers throughout time, Veni, Sancte Spiritus, Come, Holy Spirit: come into our hearts, come into our parishes, come into our homes, and renew the faith of the earth. Amen.