



St. Anne  
CATHOLIC  
COMMUNITY

## June 12, 2011 Pentecost Sunday Easter Time

*"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit" 1Corinthians 12:13*

Dear Friends;

Pastor Harry Ironside used to tell a story of a group of dissatisfied congregants who left a church to begin what they thought would be the "perfect church." They thought of themselves to be such a spiritual blessing for God that they put a sign on the outside of the front door that read "JESUS ONLY!" This church community never reached out to others and only ministered to themselves. They had become a self-serving clique. One day when Dr Ironside passed by their church he noticed that the first three letters of the sign had fallen off to reveal a new message: "US ONLY!" The new message revealed the truth about their ministry.

A couple of weeks ago I quoted Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP who said that the Holy Spirit is the nudge that makes us leave the safety of our ecclesial nests. Today we celebrate Pentecost when the Spirit came down upon the followers of Jesus to create a new humanity. The Church was created not to be a mutual admiration society or a club. The Church exists for the mission of proclaiming the reign of God and to promote the justice and compassion of the Gospel. The Church exists to be a sign and sacrament of the unity to which God calls all humanity.

The Second Vatican Council in its *Decree on Missionary Activity* spoke of the experience of Pentecost and the role of the Church. (#4) *"...on that day was foreshadowed the union of all peoples in the universality of faith by the means of...a Church which speaks every language, understands and embraces all tongues in charity, and thus overcomes the dispersion of Babel."*

Babel, of course, refers to the biblical story where peoples were divided from each other symbolized by a multiplication of languages. And rather than being a liability the Spirit now brings unity in the midst of the diversity. And the Spirit lets us see richness in the diversities of cultures throughout the world. Diversity is not to be feared but celebrated!

It is also important to remember that unity is not uniformity. Uniformity refuses to see that there can be a rich variety of expressions. Uniformity was the Roman Imperial system. It is where we think everyone must think and behave like us. Uniformity and conformity crush the unique and different.

The Spirit of God is like the rain. It falls evenly on everything yet each plant grows to be perfectly what it is the flower a flower, the tree a tree and the grass of the field to be grass. Yet each works together beautifully in the ecosystem. The same is true for us in the Spirit. Through God's gift we each grow into the unique person that we are yet part of the greater ecosystem of the human race. So let us spread the Good News, and call others to drink of the Spirit of Life.

On this Pentecost I am grateful for the diversity of gifts and peoples at St Anne may the Spirit continue to encourage their growth as we gather more and more into our fellowship of love!

Peace,

*Fr Ron*