

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jul 11th 2014

The Church came into being when Christ died on the Cross, and it was formally inaugurated at Pentecost when he sent the Holy Spirit as he had promised. This reflection takes its cue from today's Gospel in a reference to the Holy Spirit:

Do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Mt 10: 16-23)

The Holy Spirit speaks through us, just as he spoke through Christ when he delivered his Sermon on the Mount, confronted the Pharisees, and told his parables. Fear never seems to characterize his disposition in circumstances calling for him to speak.

Christ certainly experienced fear as he anticipated the cross. No doubt he had fear when, from the cross and in the duress of ultimate spiritual dryness, he said "I thirst" and quoted from Psalm 22, "My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?" But his response to that fear was pure trust: "Into your hands I commend my spirit." Nor did he have worries about saying the right thing when he spoke of his executioners from the cross, "Father, forgive them: they do not know what they are doing."

Why was that? Since he wanted simply and solely to do his Father's will, he knew that in speaking he would be guided by the Holy Spirit. In situations where Christ spoke to others his driving motive, as in everything, was to do his Father's will. Because of that he was acutely sensitive to the Father's will. He trusted that what he wanted to say was the right thing in the moment and was emboldened by the Holy Spirit prompting him to deliver his words. He had the holy instinct that as he spoke he was doing what the Father wanted because his entire objective was that his Father's will be done. He therefore trusted that whatever he did or said was the right thing in the particulars of the moment.

So too with us. We often are in situations calling us to speak for the glory of God, whether the circumstances demand that we confront forces of evil with our words, express our compassion to those who suffer, or respond to others in any moment moving us to bear witness to the love and wisdom of God. In such situations, as was the case with Christ in his public ministry, our grace is to be sensitive to the will of God, rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and then speak out as best we can to address the situation. We will deliver our words with no worries when they reflect our holy instincts that what

we want to say is, God willing, the right thing to say. That's all we can do. That is the way we try to do God's will, and it is precisely our trying to do so that God wants from us. In other words, that is his will for us in the moment. We often are in circumstances where we cannot plan what to say, but must speak the truth, words of compassion, or bare witness as best we can. We trust that the Holy Spirit will speak through us and accomplish what God wants accomplished.

The reason why this is the Christian way of proceeding is that, in the strength of our Faith and the grace of our Baptism, we are in fact joined to Christ – whatever the situation. We are his Mystical Body and are fed at his Eucharistic feast. In, with, and through Christ, we will always want what God wants. To the extent our driving motive is to do God's will, it is precisely in these situations that we, as promised, will be guided by the Holy Spirit. And in that disposition, we will respond to the Lord's comforting demand, "Do not worry . . . For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

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