

Commentary on the Gospel for Mon, May 18th 2015

During this period between the Feast of the Ascension and Pentecost Sunday, the Church challenges us to consider what the power of God's Spirit, poured out in Jesus and through Jesus to us and the whole world, causes to happen in our lives. It is clear from the readings of these days that we should long to be filled with the Spirit so we can cooperate with God to effect the transformation of the whole of creation into the realized Reign of God "on earth as it is in heaven."

Some days ago, now, while meditating on today's readings I had the opportunity to participate in the marriage celebration of one of my nephews with a lovely young woman from another large Irish-American clan. In fact, the marriage – as most such relationships do – connected at least four if not four to the nth number of clans from various parts of the world. This was a particularly joyous celebration because of the palpable love between the partners and their families of origin. The wedding was celebrated by a large contingent of family and good friends who had traveled great lengths to be there, and the celebration had all the elements of a wonderful Catholic liturgy with the assembly being a ready, even eager, celebrant surrounding the couple, and the various ministers. No theatrical production this, although preaching, music, reading and movement was all magnificently choreographed and performed, but the main actor was indeed Christ in the person of the Spirit-filled Church, the real participation by the many was incredible. The JOY that flowed through the liturgy and the party that followed, the peacefulness that abounded, the hope in the future that filled the various gathering places was all remarkable. Much of the beauty of the event was in the gifting of time and presence rather than material things.

As I look out on the world on this beautiful spring day (at least from my window at Creighton it is a beautiful spring day) I am struck by the tragedies and suffering that continue to surround all of us – the divisions among nations, races, even families – I might be tempted to say, "Ok, Jesus, the Apostles thought your message was clear and they blew it on Holy Thursday, I thought your message was clear to me, and I've received your Holy Spirit, but since this world around me seems pretty scattered and divided, it is hard to have hope that we can live in real unity – even in the Church, among the Baptized?"

Then I remember with pleasure the consolation of the Spirit that was manifested at the wedding in St. Louis just a few days ago. Christ's Spirit conquers the world's fear. Christ's love, made real and concrete in self-giving human love, drives out despair. As I remembered the peace and radiant joy on the faces of that young couple it occurred to me that I can believe that Christ continues to conquer fear and despair – so He really will end all divisions – He has won, he continues to win, and in the end He will reign in VICTORY, so now is the time to hang on – and celebrate!

"Come Holy Spirit, pour out the fire of your love to purify our hearts and end all divisions."

Eileen Burke-Sullivan-Creighton University Office of Mission and Ministry