



Of Seeds and Flowers



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PENTECOST: CAN WE GET THERE FROM HERE??

A good friend, Father Joe Lange, about 30 years ago, wrote the following article in 'Church World', the newspaper for the Portland Diocese in Maine. It is more TIMELY AND TRUE TODAY than it was 30 years ago! OPEN HEART, OPEN MIND!!

THE GUIDANCE AND NECESSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: One of the ways we have been formed by our Catholic culture is the sense that real holiness is for priests and nuns. To find out how deeply ingrained that is, all you have to do is tell a group of lay people that they are called to be holy and then ask them how they feel about that. The response, expressed in many ways, boils down to "You're adding something on to what I learned. I mean, I can get to heaven without all that, can't I?" There is immense confusion about what it is to be holy and what it is to be a disciple of Jesus. As Bishop Flores, San Antonio Texas, recently said. **"Catholics have been "SACRAMENTALIZED and not "EVANGELIZED".**



Another way in which our Catholic culture has formed us is in our ignorance about the Holy Spirit. Many will feel like this is something "added on," too, since they did not learn about it as children. What was not taught in our religion classes was not celebrated in our church calendar either. Christmas and Easter are our big feasts. Not much was made of Pentecost.

In 1897, Pope Leo XIII noted that we Catholics seem to have overlooked the Holy Spirit. He said in the encyclical "Divinum Illud" that if we were asked whether we have received the Holy Spirit, some would answer, "We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Spirit." Acts of the Apostles The Pope goes on to say that while we use the name, Holy Spirit, in our prayers, we are very deficient in our knowledge of the Holy Spirit, so he directs preachers and those **"who have care of souls"** that it is their duty to instruct their people more diligently and more fully about the Holy Spirit. **We didn't pay a whole lot of attention to that encyclical either.**



Pope Leo asked the whole church to pray the novena from Ascension Thursday to Pentecost for a **new Pentecost in our time, a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a new empowering, a new giving of life by the Spirit.** This, too, was the prayer of John XXIII prayed at all Masses before and during the Second Vatican Council. We prayed ***"Renew in our own days your miracles as of a second Pentecost."***

Many of the Bishops at the Vatican Council spoke of the power of the Spirit moving among them. Pope Paul VI opened the third session in 1964 by saying ***"The Spirit is here ... to illuminate and guide our labors to the benefit of the Church and all mankind. The Spirit is here. We call upon him, wait for him, follow him. The Spirit is here."***

In 1966, Paul VI commented on the work of the Spirit in the Church. He said that the actions of the Spirit could be diminished or even made absent, so "For this reason, **if we really love the Church,** the main thing we must do is to foster in it an outpouring of the divine Paraclete, the Holy Spirit."

I don't want to just leave that last quote as if it was just another paragraph in this article. **This is strong stuff: "If we really love the Church," he says. "If we really love the Church, the main thing we must do is to foster in it an outpouring of the divine Paraclete, the Holy Spirit. I believe that. I really do.** I see the joy of pastors bringing those who would listen to an openness to the Spirit. The Spirit leads us to Christ who takes us to the heart of God whom he calls Father. There we are **enlightened and cleansed and healed and empowered and sent forth.** As people

come to the Spirit, we watch them grow and mature, and we discover together what the Spirit is gifting each one and all of us to do. Hence, **we have reached the beyond to which religious structures and practices point.** There is no longer the need to waste time on programs or to imitate what other churches are doing or to jump on this bandwagon or that. Preachers, teachers, leaders call people to the Holy Spirit. -The Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church did that. (90% of priests and bishops would not get involved). The CURSILLO was/is an **incredibly most effective** evangelizing tool. (90% of priests and bishops would not get involved) Lay people took to both movements big time. It's not magic. It's a lot of hard work and much change of heart is needed. It is humility before God, docility to the Spirit, discipline and love.

A DROP OF RAIN... A BIT OF SUN.

Each night for the past 3 years, before I pray Evening and Night prayer in the Divine Office, I have been praying , deeper and deeper, the following two prayers. Good results!! -Pray them with your whole HEAD and HEART....



Come Lord Jesus: Jesus, I don't like the way I am. I've tried to live independently of you. My pride, ego and laziness have gotten in the way. I've tried to run my own life and I just haven't succeeded. I'm not at all the kind of person I would really like to be. I've left you out of my life. I'm sorry that I have hurt so many people and failed so many others - including myself. I don't want to be that way anymore. I ask you to forgive me and heal me; I need you and I want to share my life with you. Jesus, I accept you as my Lord and my Savior. Come into my heart and share your life with me. I want you to be the most important person in my life. Jesus, show me your face that I might love you. Let me experience your presence and your power in my life. **Amen**

Come Holy Spirit: Jesus, I know now that I am yours and you are mine forever. I thank you for sending your Spirit to me that I might have the power to live this new life with you. **Stir up** your Spirit in me. **Release** your Spirit in me. **Baptize me** with the fullness of your Spirit. That I may experience your presence and power in my life. That I may find new meaning in your scriptures. That I may find new meaning in the Sacraments; that I may find delight and comfort in prayer. That I may be able to love as you love and forgive as you forgive. That I may discover and use the gifts you give me for the life of your People; that I may experience the peace, the joy and love that you have promised us. Fill me with your Spirit, Jesus. I wish to receive all that you have to give me. **Amen.**

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ISN'T DIFFICULT; AT THE HUMAN LEVEL, WITH HUMAN STRENGTH ALONE, **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE.** LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS NOT A MATTER OF WILL POWER. USING ONLY WILL POWER AND HUMAN STRENGTH ALONE IS THE REASON SO MANY PEOPLE BECOME DISCOURAGED AND LIVE ONLY HALF-LIVES AS CHRISTIANS OR HUMAN BEINGS OR GIVE UP COMPLETELY. THIS IS WHY GRACE AND GOD'S LOVE AND THE ESPECIALLY THE POWER AND LIFE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS PROMISED BY JESUS AT THE LAST SUPPER. HE KNEW **WE COULDN'T DO IT ALONE OR WITH OUR OWN STRENGTH AND GOOD INTENTIONS.** JESUS SAID, "IT WILL BE TO **YOUR ADVANTAGE** THAT I GO. IF I FAIL TO GO, THE PARACLETE (HOLY SPIRIT) WILL NEVER COME TO YOU." JN. 16:7. WHY NOT **"TAKE ADVANTAGE? THAT IS THE PLAN.** "APART FROM ME YOU CAN DO **NOTHING."** Jn.15; 5. **NOTHING IS A LOT!!!**

*"The charisms given by the Spirit are the **NUCLEAR ENERGY**" of the Church," says Father Cantalamessa, who is the private preacher to the Pope and his household." **NO CHARISMS, NO ENERGY!!***

ALL, ALL of the above gives you an EXPERIENCE OF God, an encounter, not JUST AN INTELLECTUAL UNDERSTANDING. Too many people get stuck in their intellect. Our intellect is important but it is experience that changes us.- PhD's are tough! **So VERY,VERY sorry for so many words!!** WORDS don't change us either. **EXPERIENCE!!!** Too much TALK as well!! Talk. talk, talk, words, words. Fr. Joe Lange would two or three times in his talks say, ***"Now, what are you going to do about it?"***

HOW TO GET STARTED? Pray the above prayers and ask the Lord to free, to release, the Holy Spirit you received in Baptism and deepened in Confirmation. -commonly called "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit". Check the Charismatic Renewal office in your diocese, with you parish or retreat center. In CT. give Fr. Ray Introvigne a call, 860-887-0702. On YouTube: Check, "Life in the Spirit Seminars" or "As by a New Pentecost" found at **comcenter.com**

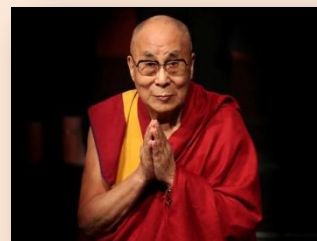
VISION AND REALITY

Alexander Solzenitzen, the Russian Author, often said that we, in the West, are suffering from "spiritual exhaustion". - a 911 spiritual emergency!!! - a SPIRITUAL RECESSION!

The Corona Virus has given us a chance to become ACUTELY AWARE of that exhaustion. God didn't cause the virus, but He sure has taken great advantage of it!!! Maybe a better analogy: Corona has been like the precious little grain of sand that sneaks into the oyster and irritates the oyster into producing *a beautiful pearl*. Corona has helped many people to discover the false self. Soul pain can't be resolved with merely human answers. The role of the Holy Spirit is to be the GREAT REVEALER of the false self. -A WONDERFUL OUTCOME!! NO MORE SPIRITUAL TOURISTS!! Pray at your own risk. Everyone knows that God, truth, church, religion, evil, spirituality, prayer, etc. are all in contention RIGHT NOW!. Choices HAVE TO BE MADE!!

Many people die at twenty five and aren't buried until they are seventy five.
Is what you are doing TODAY going to make you better TOMORROW?

The Dalai Lama, On Humanity: Asked what surprised him most about humanity, the Dalai Lama replied: *"Man sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then, he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then he dies never having lived."*



The Gospel, the Good News, is more than a pillow to sleep on. Jesus is more than a security blanket. He died and rose out of love for YOU and is longing for YOUR LOVE. The GOOD NEWS IS: God wants more for you than you want for yourself and He is willing to give you the POWER, the HOLY SPIRIT, to humbly achieve it. *"Every generation is converted by the Saint who contradicts it most."* Chesterton

A Rating Code for Sermons: You might want to rate the next sermon you hear or perhaps this issue of "OF SEEDS and FLOWERS" using the following code:

Rated "G"	Rated "PG"
Generally acceptable to everyone. Full of inoffensive, common platitudes. Usually described as "wonderful" or "marvelous."	More mature congregations. At times this sermon makes the Gospel relevant to today's issues. May even contain mild suggestions for change. Often described as "challenging" , though no one intends to take any action or change any attitudes.
Rated "R"	Rated "X"
Definitely restricted to those not upset by truth. This sermon "tells it like it is." Threatens the comfortable; most often described as "disturbing" or "controversial." Usually indicates that the preacher has an outside source of income.	Positively limited to those who can handle bombshell/explosive ideas. This sermon really "socks it to 'em." The kind of sermon that landed Jeremiah in the well, got Amos run out of town, surprised Jonah, and nailed Jesus to the cross. Always described as "shocking" or "in poor taste." The minister who preaches this sermon had better have his/her suitcase packed and life insurance paid in full.

"Audiences know what to expect and that is all they are willing to believe in." Opening lines from the play, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern".

Does this sound like SUNDAY MORNING IN
YOUR CHURCH?



God does not die on the day when we cease to believe in a personal deity, but we die on the day when our lives cease to be illumined by the steady radiance, renewed daily, of a wonder, the source of which is beyond all reason.

(Dag Hammarskjöld)



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SPEAKING SOFTLY

When I was a principal of a Catholic High School, I would take 30 students and six faculty members on a weekend retreat once a month. We would conduct a *"Cursillo-Like Retreat"* for the students and they would come back on Sunday afternoon fired-up for the Lord and their spiritual growth. We would nourish their new life with a prayer meeting each Thursday night in the gym. - 150 students praising God! Can you imagine? Daily religion classes encouraged the students. It would take about six months and the students were prepared and ready to be prayed with for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. We prayed. The Spirit always came. Peace, joy, whole lives, freedom. The school was a happy place. Less discipline problems, the chapel was actually used. Wouldn't it be something if all Catholic Grade and High schools and COLLEGES DID THE SAME?? Our churches would be full! **If you capture their HEARTS, their HEADS will follow.**



83% of the people who leave the Catholic church do so before the age of 23. Confirmation has been called the exit door to the church. The largest Church in the U. S. is the Catholic Church. The Second largest church in the U.S. is made up of Catholics who have left the church. -and so it is in South America.

Cindy, my wife, and I have had our lives transformed by our Cursillo and Charismatic Renewal (Baptism in the Holy Spirit) experiences. The Scriptures come alive, prayer becomes sweet, sacraments alive, peace and freedom of the Gospel.

FEAR keeps more people from God more than anything else. Fear of what others might think, or say or do. Fear of what God might ask of you, however the truth is, He never asks anything you can't or aren't willing to do. Don't let your fears keep you from the fullness, the peace, the joy, the freedom of the Sons and daughter of God. You won't have to go to the airport and hand out leaflets or go "door to door" to tell everybody about your new life. -just ENJOY it all in your daily life, as you work, eat, sleep, recreate, pray, read the Scriptures. Give it a shot! "Our emotional programming is such that we rarely hear what we do not wish to hear, and often NEED TO HEAR." Thomas Keating

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