

The day of Pentecost came on the wings of prayer.

Ten days before the day of Pentecost the disciples ask Jesus when will you restore the Kingdom of Israel. Jesus answers, "It is not for you to know the times and the periods that the Father has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and the ends of the earth." Then Jesus is lifted up into heaven in His ascension.

As the disciples stared at this in wonder and amazement the angels appeared and said to them go and wait in Jerusalem until you the promise of the Father.

They returned to Jerusalem. They went to the upper room, and they devoted themselves to prayer. (Act 1:14). And I am sure that the disciples' prayer had to do with God giving them the power to accomplish what He had in mind for them. How would they be witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea, then Samaria and the ends of the earth. As they were devoting themselves to prayer, they did not sit there doing nothing. They had to replace Judas Iscariot. That took prayer to discern who God might be calling. Once the two candidates were determined, they drew lots to see which one it would be, and the lot fell to Matthias. All of this was in preparation for receiving the Power of the promised Holy Spirit.

Then after 10 days when Jesus ascended, And on the fiftieth day after Passover, that prayer was answered.

With the rush of a mighty wind, filling the entire house. Tongues of fire resting on each of their heads. Then they began to speak in languages so that all could hear the Good News of what God had done for them in His only Son Jesus Christ. The crowds are amazed because they see these uneducated men speaking in languages that would take year to master. Of course, there has to be skeptics in the crowd who accuse them of being drunk on new wine.

Peter begins to preach...He answers the charge of New Wine.

The last time we were with Peter was in the courtyard where Jesus was on trial in front of the Jewish court. When confronted about His relationship with His lord Jesus, Peter turns coward. He denies His Lord. I don't know Him.

But this day is different. Now with the power of the Holy Spirit Peter preaches fearlessly about God's love in Jesus and that Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Scriptures. At end of the sermon the people are cut to the heart and ask what they need to do to be saved. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized. The preaching of Peter 3,000 of them baptized that day and the Christian Church was born. Through the preaching of Peter, 3000 ears were opened, 3000 eyes were opened. 3000 hearts were opened. The Church was born on the wings of prayer. Through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pretty spectacular isn't it.

It does not occur in any other way. As Martin Luther puts it, "I cannot by my own strength or reason believe that Jesus is my Lord, or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called through the gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, has sanctified me and kept me in the one truer faith."

2000 years later the Holy Spirit continues to be at work in the life of the church. Calling us sinners to repentance, confessing our sins, giving sinners the promise of God forgiveness. The Holy Spirit is at Work, calling and gathering the Christian Church, enlightening us with God's love and forgiveness, creating and sustaining and shaping faith through the Word of the Holy Scriptures. What a gift that God has given to each of us!

As this gospel is preached from pulpits, taught and shares in Sunday School Classes, discussed around kitchen tables, the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, and enlightens, with the gift of faith in His people.

You may say, "That I haven't experienced the Holy Spirit in such a spectacular way as those first disciples did on that first Pentecost."

When Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit Gospel today, he does not speak of the spectacular and sensational. It appears that much of the work is done rather quietly. Jesus uses a word here in Greek, "Paraclete." Actually, it can be translated many ways: Counsellor, Comforter, Helper, Advocate. IT actually means the one who is

called alongside. To walk with you in daily life. He works quietly helping you and giving you direction in life. This is where you need to be attentive through prayer.

Some examples of where the Holy Spirit has done His work this way, is when you are called upon to pray. And wonder if you can do this or even come up with the right words. St. Paul tells in our Romans reading for today that when we do not know how to pray as we ought the Spirit intercede in our behalf with sighs too deep for words. He takes our intentions in prayer and makes them right before our Father who is in heaven.

Another example happened in my first call when we asked one of youth to be a lector for a particular Sunday. He signed up for a Sunday not knowing it was Pentecost Sunday, which means he drew the Acts 2 Lesson with all those hard to pronounce nationalities. He got through it pretty well, like he had studied it and practiced it. He later admitted he did not look at it until he arrived at Church that Sunday morning. The Holy Spirit.

Finally, reflect on your own baptism. Your personal Pentecost. When the Holy Spirit was breathed into you through spoken word in the watery word of the Gospel. You became part of the family of God which has been called, gathered, and set apart as God people in the Body of Jesus Christ, where He daily and richly forgives all your sins and the sins of believers.

Then on the last day He will raise you up and all the dead and give eternal life to you and all believers.

This is most certainly true.