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Today' s Word

Easter Sunday, Year A (24 May)

Parish Priest: Father Hiroshi Konishi

First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2:1 - 11

Second Reading: First Letter to the Corinthians 12:3b - 7, 12 - 13

Gospel Reading: Gospel of John 20:19 - 23

[Seeking a Deeper Understanding of the Holy Spirit]

Let us reflect on the event of Pentecost from the three points listed below.

◇Mary and the Apostles Praying for the Holy Spirit

Although not mentioned in the First Reading, while waiting for the promised Holy Spirit, Mary prayed together with the Apostles.

◇The Descent of the Holy Spirit: An Event That Brings Us Together

People who could not understand one another were brought together and became able to understand each other. This is thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is because God is with us through the Holy Spirit.

◇The Grace of the Holy Spirit

The Lord Christ continues to send the promised Holy Spirit even now. And this Holy Spirit never grows old; it remains ever new and vibrant, continually bestowing God' s life upon humanity. Those who live by receiving the Holy Spirit are called to a new way of life.

Paul describes the fruit of the Holy Spirit as “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians5:22), but the fruit of the Holy Spirit can be summarized in the following four points.

1. “Hope does not disappoint us. For God' s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5), the Holy Spirit is God' s love itself. When this Holy Spirit is poured out, people begin to live in love. In order to live out Jesus' commandment to love one another, the divine power that drives love—the Holy Spirit—must be poured out through the resurrected Christ.

2. The Holy Spirit is the source of fellowship. By giving the Holy Spirit, God the Father has fully given His Son to us. Just as at the time of Jesus' baptism, the encounter and unity between the Father and the Son were accomplished through the Holy Spirit. Similarly, in order for us to belong to Christ, we must receive the Holy Spirit. Conversely, those who do not have the Holy Spirit within them do not belong to Christ (Romans8:9).

3. The new life given by the Holy Spirit is eternal life that never perishes. Christ's promise, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20), is fulfilled through the Holy Spirit.

4. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit who enabled Jesus to pray, "Abba, Father," enables us to pray the same prayer. And the Holy Spirit awakens in us the desire to walk in the way of Christ.

Background and Structure of the First Reading

The First Reading describes the scene of the descent of the Holy Spirit and has the following background and structure.

◇Background

The Promise of the Descent of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' Ascension (Chapter 1:4 - 11) → The Group of Apostles (Chapter 1:12 - 14) → Matthias Becomes an Apostle (Chapter 1:13 - 26) → The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 2:1 - 13) → Peter's Sermon (Chapter 2:14 - 36)

The account describing the situation after the Ascension states, "When they entered the city, they went up to the upper room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

"They were all together in one place, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers, and they were all praying with one accord" (1:13 - 14) serves as the premise for the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Please keep in mind the scene of the disciples praying with Mary at the center.

◇Structure

A 2:1 - 4 They began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them (2:4)

B (2:5 - 6) The amazed crowd

A' (2:7 - 11) "Listen! They are speaking in our own languages about the mighty works of God!" (2:11)

B' (2:12 - 13) The amazed crowd

The key words for the event of Pentecost are "speaking" and "amazed."

Announcement

The church website is back online.
The address is <https://www.seta-catholic-church.com/>.

Next week's Mass begins at 10:30 a.m.