

Feast of Pentecost Homily

Last Friday six members of Corpus Christi participated in a Peace Walk over on the east side of Detroit near Six Mile and Gratiot. The group made up of members of churches throughout Detroit is called the Detroit Community Clergy Alliance. They have been walking twice a week for the last two years to help establish peace and non-violence in in our city.

As we began to walk, we realized how big a challenge this neighborhood had. Many of the good-sized apartment buildings are abandoned and have been open to trespass. The church located in the area has raised funds to do extensive boarding up of buildings.

About fifteen of us were walking down one of the blocks last Friday. Half of the houses and apartments on the block were abandoned. On one side of the street there was a string of seven houses. Six of them were abandoned and open to trespass and weeds the height of three feet. In the middle of these seven houses, one house stood out. Its grass was neatly cut. There was a large gathering of family members on the front porch having a good time.

I walked over to the family to give them a brochure to explain who why we were there... that we were walking for peace in the city. Then all of a sudden this young five year old boy left the porch and came up

to me. He had this large smile on his face which spread from ear to ear. He just came up to me and gave me a huge hug! Then he stepped back and hugged his father's leg as if to bring us together. Joy permeated every bone of his body.

His father explained that the family was celebrating the boy's birthday. Then I noticed, the rest of the family on the porch, the young ones eating pizza and just enjoying life. Here in the midst of a neighborhood in abandonment and neglect, the Spirit of God's joy ruled!

(Pause)

My brothers and sisters, today is the Feast of Pentecost. Our readings tell us of the great outpouring of the Spirit on the Apostles and, through the apostles, and through them, to 3,000 people in Jerusalem. Scripture says that Peter then spoke to the people from sixteen nations had gathered, and they all could understand him. His being was on fire with the Spirit. They experienced something in Peter's words which spoke to their hearts. They were deeply attracted to the joy in Peter's words and became immediate followers of the Lord.

As we gather to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost this weekend, the experience of the outpouring of the Spirit on that first Pentecost seems so far away from us, but is it really! Here we are, gathered as the people of Corpus Christi.

- **With members of our parish who were born in sixteen different nations through the world,**
- **With people who have joined who grew up in many different faith communities,**
- **People here of every hue and color,**
- **People rich and poor, from city and suburb, high school drop outs and those with doctorate degrees**
- **Both saints and sinners**

We surely are as diverse as the people who gathered on that first Pentecost.

Each of us has been given to drink the joy of that same Spirit,

- **The same Spirit who hovered over the disciples in the upper room,**
- **The same Spirit who called Peter to boldly preach in the streets of Jerusalem,**
- **The same Spirit who energizes the faith community on the east side who board up abandoned buildings,**

- **The same Spirit who calls Corpus Christi to help rebuild our own neighborhood,**
- **The same Spirit who infected the soul of a five year old boy to hug a man whom he had not ever met, of a different race and different part of town.**

Yes, my brothers and sister, we have ALL been given to drink of that same Spirit.

(Pause)

When the risen Lord appeared to the disciples, he said, Peace be with you! The he bestowed on them the gift of the Spirit. Do we not spread the very same Spirit every time we wish peace to one another here at mass! The very joy which we share is the same joy which was in the heart of that young five year old boy is now. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit binding us to one another.

Our families, our city, our world hungers for the same Spirit which came on the first Pentecost Sunday. (Pause)

Come, Come, Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit on us and we shall be recreated, and we shall renew the face of the earth!

Come Holy Spirit, Come!

