

## Homily on the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

How can we remain in God? How can we keep His commandments? How can we lay down our life as Jesus did? These are examples of radical way of following Christ? The question is how can we follow Christ as Jesus wants us to? Today I would like to share with you the secret of my spiritual life and growth that I have learned from 45 years of my life and journey. One thing I can tell you, for sure, that there is a huge difference between your life before you receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and after you receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit! As I told you before, I was fortunate enough to grow up in a very traditional catholic family. I was baptized as a baby, made my first holy communion, became an altar boy, confirmed, went to seminary for 12 years and was ordained. Before and after my ordination, either attended daily mass or celebrated it. But the strange thing about spiritual experience was that most of the times, the celebration of the Mass was boring, prayer time was not that fascinating! One time during my prayer time, I thought to myself “What is my problem”? Then I Started reading the life stories of saints and spiritual fathers! Then I was struck by the opinion of Ignatius of Laodicea an Orthodox Metropolitan who once said “Without the Holy Spirit,” “God is distant, Christ is merely an historical figure, the Gospel is a dead letter, the Church is just an organization, authority is domination, mission is propaganda, liturgy is only nostalgia, and the work of Christians is slave labor. But with the Holy Spirit, Christ is risen and present, the Gospel is a living force, the Church is a communion in the life of the Trinity, authority is a service that sets people free, mission is Pentecost, the liturgy is memory and anticipation, and the labor of Christians is divinized.” The Holy Spirit is the soul of the Church. Then I decided to look deep into the idea of a special Pentecost experience in my personal life that changed my life upside down.

Even in the life of you Jesus you will see a difference before and after the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Once Jesus received the Holy Spirit, He is no longer leading a private life. But day in and day out proclaiming the kingdom rejoicing in the Holy Spirit and performing all kinds of miracles. At this point nothing and nobody can intimidate Jesus. What about the apostles before and after receiving the Holy Spirit? What a difference the Holy Spirit made when He came into, the lives of the early disciples? There was a notable difference in them after Pentecost, when the Spirit came upon them. "What A Difference A Day Makes". A group of despondent, discouraged disciples now turn to be miracle workers. Nothing and nobody can intimidate them!!

At some point of my life I had the opportunity get involved with the charismatic movement. I was fascinated with the stories of some people. For example : This lady who was a chain smoker for 30 years and always wanted to end her smoking. Finally she prayed to the Holy Spirit and it was taken away. She is smoke free now. This man who was an alcoholic for 50 years; and now the addiction and craving gone away, when people in the charismatic movement prayed over him. This young man who was addicted to pornography for 35 years he came to know about the power of the Holy Spirit and he prayed a novena to the Holy Spirit and finally the addiction was taken away from him.

The Holy Spirit and you are a dynamic duo. Without Him you are going to struggle. With Him you are an unstoppable force. Without the Spirit we are just like lights without electricity or fireplaces without a fire. The Holy Spirit is like a microphone. It will project you voice out where everyone will be able to hear you. Suppose, you want to travel to LA. There are many ways you can travel. You can

walk but it might take several weeks to get there. You can drive that might take several days to get there. And finally you can fly and before you know you are there. That is called life in the Holy Spirit. Impossible things become possible. Remember the story of Mother Teresa. She was Sr. Agnes and a teacher in a small school but when she received a double portion of the Holy Spirit, she became Mother Teresa and living saint.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that St. Paul was visiting this Christian community in Ephesus. As he preached and celebrated Mass, he noticed that people were yawning and sleeping. He asked them, 'have you received the Holy Spirit'? They said 'we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit'. He prayed over them and they were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Cornelius and his family were the first Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit because they were humble. When Peter, a common Galilean fisherman, entered the home of Cornelius, the powerful Roman centurion, Cornelius humbly dropped to his knees and bowed low before Peter. Cornelius and his family were so open to the Holy Spirit that, when Peter merely began to talk about Jesus, they were baptized in the Spirit, spoke in tongues, and glorified God (Acts 10:44-46). Few of us are as open to the Spirit as Cornelius. However, we can become more open to the Spirit by praying, hearing God's word, and repenting of our sin. In these ways, the Lord opened His disciples to the Spirit at the first Pentecost. He will open us to the Spirit in the same ways.

We are two weeks away from Pentecost, a world-changing, life-changing outpouring of the Holy Spirit. . God wants to pour out His Spirit on "all flesh" (see

Jl 3:1), even on those like Cornelius who have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel. What we need to do to receive a Baptism in the Holy Spirit?

1. A total surrender- example of Mother Mary  
Time, Talent, and everything to the Lord
2. A Complete Cleansing- A good confession rejecting Satan and his empty promises.
3. A great Desire- Read and study about the Holy Spirit. Fasting for 3 days like St. Paul and you will be hungry, like summer rain nourishing the earth.

Back in 2011, I attended a big charismatic conference and I received a baptism in the Holy Spirit. I am no longer the same person. Prayer is no longer bearing. Jesus is my passion and nothing and nobody can intimidate me any longer! For the next couple of weeks, as we are getting ready for the feast of Pentecost, let's open up and receive the Holy Spirit. "Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!" (2 Cor 6:2) "Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, and in our hearts take up Thy rest."