

## **Pentecost (A) 2008, Homily by Fr. Peter Clark**

The Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water is common at mass in the Easter Season and takes the place of the Penitential Rite where we confess our sinfulness. I know some of you may have received more blessing than others.

When after mass, your friends ask you, “Why do you have all those spots on your clothes?” You can answer “The spots are from holy water, a reminder of my baptism, the forgiveness of all my sins, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit being poured into my life.”

“You see, I’m Catholic! I believe in outward signs of God’s mercy which show what is happening to me spiritually on the inside.”

The unseen God translates his goodness and mercy into actions, symbols and sacraments in the Church, that speak to our believing hearts of Christ’s continued saving work today:

- the water in this baptismal font,
- the incense (our prayers) rising up to heaven,
- the bread and wine, that in the Eucharist, which by the prayers of the priest become sustaining food from heaven.

Today, we celebrate that powerful anointing on the Church from above: Pentecost. After completing his work on earth and ascending into heaven, out of human sight, Christ now shares with us his Holy Spirit ten days later. With his Spirit in us we cry out, “Abba, Father,” and “Jesus is Lord.” We grow in holiness.

Jesus tells us, ***“The water I shall give him will become in him a fountain of living water, welling up to eternal light.”*** I really like that image of the Holy Spirit as refreshing water.

I can understand why Christ would call the grace of the Holy Spirit living water; because all things are dependent upon water. That water comes down like the rain we've been having this past month.

Water is simple, always the same (much like God is), but it produces many different effects, one in the lilac bush, another in the apple tree with its blossoms, another on the flowers, the spectrum of vegetables, and in the trees. While remaining essentially the same, water refreshes all living things, adapting itself to the needs of every creature that is open to it.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit, whose nature is always the same, simple and indivisible, apportions grace to each man and woman as he wills. Although the Spirit never changes, the effects of its action, by the will of the Father and through Christ, are both many and marvelous.

As St. Paul tells us today, ***“To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”***

All our varied gifts, inspired by the Spirit, have a unity in God, because they are intended for the common good of the Church. One is a teacher; another interprets Scripture; another does works of mercy. Many of us are blessed with generous hearts for the support of ministries and the Church.

The beautiful flowering of all our gifts, is one well orchestrated act of the Body of Christ, through the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit, both for the glory of God, and our common good.

And outside observers can see the work of the Holy Spirit in us by how we love each other, visible in our families. Today we honor mothers and the sacrificial love they have shown to us.

Love is visible among us as parishioners and between the students and teachers at St. Mary School. They can see God in our worship.

Another sign of the Spirit's work is an increase in our numbers. We had 16 come into the church at Easter. We have an adult confirmation today at 11:00 AM Mass.

Even this summer there is no vacation from the working of the Holy Spirit. As you travel, look for the location and times of Catholic churches. Pray daily for our parish evangelization teams. Look for opportunities to show mercy.

So be open to the refreshing water of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus tells us, "***Peace be with you.*** The Lord breathes on us today, "***Receive the Holy Spirit.***"

Be refreshed and renewed, and then boldly and confidently step out in the spending of all the gifts of the Spirit God has bestowed upon you. We will blossom like the trees and flowers you see this spring day.