

More than a century ago, a great sailing ship was stranded off the coast of South Africa. Week after week the ship lay in the still waters without a hint of a breeze. The captain was becoming desperate as he watched his men succumb to thirst. Then one day the crew spotted a steamship on the horizon heading directly for them; as the ship came within range, the captain cried out, "We need water. Can you give us some water?" The steamship captain responded, "Lower your buckets where you are?" With that the ship began to pull away. "Lower our buckets. What kind of suggestion is that?" Disgusted, the captain went below deck. After the deck had been cleared one of the yeomen on board did just what the other boat had suggested; he took his bucket and dropped it over the side into the sea and then pulled the bucket up and tasted the water that had been drawn. It was cool and it was fresh. What the crew had not realized all the

time they were stranded was that they were just out of sight of the mouth of the Amazon River. For all those weeks they were right on top of all the fresh water they needed.

If there is one thing our celebration of Pentecost can do for us; it can remind us of the rich, fresh gift of the Holy Spirit that lies within us. So many people in our world today are searching for something to fill a void in their lives but they are not sure what it is and where they can get it. Some might build a big house or drive a big fancy car; they might drink too much or go on shopping binges and yet they still come up empty. If only they would drop their buckets over the side and see what they have inside of themselves. People, since the day we were born the Holy Spirit has been a part of who we are.

At confirmation we focused on this divine presence and its benefits for our life as a Christian and a Catholic.

What happens so often is that once the oil is dry from confirmation, people go back to their lives and the encouragement they receive from the sacrament is put away somewhere or it fades. That is so unfortunate especially in this day and age. If ever there was a time when we could all use some inspiration and hope it would be now. With unrest raging all over the planet and gas prices hovering just below three dollars a gallon, and children graduating from High School and going to college; fear, frustration, and sadness are all around us. Yet if we think back to our own confirmation we can come to understand that the Holy Spirit is right here with us waiting for us to drop our bucket and receive some nourishment.

I would especially encourage our young adults to recall their confirmation a few weeks ago and all that went on during the celebration. God is talking but are we listening.

That is why it is so important that Pentecost not be just a once a year acknowledgement. We should live Pentecost everyday. Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of El Salvador affirmed this in his homily on Pentecost 1978.

“It will always be Pentecost in the Church provided the Church lets the beauty of the Holy Spirit shine forth from her countenance. When the Church ceases to let her strength rest on the power which Christ promised her and which he gave her on that day, and when the Church leans rather on the weak forces of earthly power or wealth then the Church ceases to be true to herself. The Church will be fair to see, perennially young, attractive in every age, as long as she is faithful to the Spirit that floods her and that she reflects through her communities, through her pastors, through her very life.”

These words of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the words of our gospel today remind us that Pentecost is not a one

day celebration; it is a state of mind. The Spirit of God which was breathed onto the first disciples; still breathes in all who believe. Without this breath there is no life. Fulton Sheen once said, “even though we are God’s chosen people, we often behave more like God’s frozen people; frozen in our prayer life, frozen in the way we relate to others, frozen in the way we celebrate our faith.” This is the perfect day to ask the Holy Spirit to rekindle in us the spirit of new life and enthusiasm that is connected to the fire of God’s love. Let’s end today with this short prayer that was a favorite of John Cardinal Newman:

Come Holy Spirit  
Make our ears to hear  
Make our eyes to see  
Make our mouths to speak  
Make our hearts to seek  
Make our hands to reach out.