



By Pat Haggerty

What causes you fear? Is it fear of the unknown? Fear of stepping out of your comfort zone? Fear of public speaking? We all have different fears, and they may change from day to day depending upon a situation. One of my fears is failing to do an excellent job at a task I have been given. I am an over-achiever, and always have been. We are often called “type A” people and that can be a burden. Harry Truman told us that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” When you think about it that is so true!

When the disciples were in that upper room following Jesus’ ascension into heaven, they were experiencing fear. Their fears were squelched when Jesus entered the room and said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” (John 20:20) That was the day when he breathed on them and sent them the Holy Spirit. They must have felt such joy and exhilaration that day! “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.” (Acts of the Apostles 2:4)

There is so much for us to reflect on as we think of Pentecost. We can ponder overcoming our fears to become strong evangelizers for God’s kingdom. It takes strength to be a follower of Jesus. The disciples knew that but they were sustained by the gifts they received on Pentecost. They were on fire with love for the Lord and they were ready for their mission---to spread the message of Jesus.

Are we on fire as modern Christians? Are we ready to spread the message? Are we at peace with ourselves having been given the gift of peace? Think about it! Just like the disciples in that upper room, we are charged with using the gifts of the Lord to bring his message of love to

others. Like any charge, that mission comes with many responsibilities. As a result of the Spirit, though, we can handle any obstacle.

What I love about the message of Pentecost is that we are each given a personal message. As Saint Paul said in his letter to the Corinthians (12:3b-7), "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."

Ponder the gifts that you have been given. Are you using them in service to the Lord? Whatever it is YOU have been given is your charge and mission. We are unique members of Christ's Mystical Body; we need to act in our own way, with our own gifts, with our own individuality. We need to fulfill our mission through whatever state of life we are in---as parents, as teachers, as care-givers, as tax accountants, as engineers, as clerics. God wants us to use the gifts he has given us---as strong communicators, as caring individuals, as creative beings, as talented musicians, as struggling writers.

Let us each consider how we can overcome our fears and use our gifts to spread the message of God's love. It isn't always easy, but we have the Spirit to guide us. As the songs says, "Be Not Afraid."