

From the Director

Renewal & The Time of Jubilee (Part 2)

We have been renewed by the Holy Spirit so that we can freely choose to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit in the exercising of the gifts we have freely been given "when hands were laid upon us." This means growing in the awareness of, and the understanding of the purpose of each of the gifts, culminating in the exercise of the gifts as led by the Spirit.

We need to step out of the boat of our comfort zone at the various divine appointments God gives us each day and do what God ask us to do. Then watch what he will do. This is what Peter and John did when they saw the paralyzed beggar at the Temple gate. They had been empowered, they were going to the Temple to give thanks and God put in their path a man who needed healing. Peter and John acted in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. The man was healed and many more came to believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The early Church did not see these divine appointments with signs and wonders as unusual and limited to a few people. Rather, they saw them as normative for those who are spirit-filled disciples of Jesus. And thus

they prayed, as we read in Acts 4:29-31: "And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, as you stretch forth [your] hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus." As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness."

The third role of the Holy Spirit is to mission us as bold disciple/witnesses. We need to remember the words of Paul to Timothy "to stir into flame the gift of God" for "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love." What God desires in this time of the Renewal is a new missionary energy, bringing the Good News of God's saving love to today's ends of the earth, where the marginalized, the poor, the spiritually barren, the unchurched and the none-churched reside and are perishing.

In the words of Pope Francis: "There is no greater freedom than that of letting oneself be carried by the Spirit, refusing to calculate and to control everything, and allow Him to illuminate you, lead you, guide you, and push you where He wishes. He knows well what the need is in every Pope St. John Paul II called for a

"New Evangelization." Pope Francis echoes this in his call for missionary disciples. What does he mean? You must 'go forth,' boldly taking the first step to draw near to those who do not know or live the Gospel, by building bridges, supporting others, taking on the 'smell of the sheep' and patiently seeking to accompany them on their journey...for the message we announce should be the 'heart of the Gospel,' which is the joyful proclamation that Jesus loves them, gave his life to save them and seeks to live at their side each day to strengthen and free them."

Yes, this is a new moment of grace for the Church and the Renewal. It calls for a fresh, new response. Following the lead of those who were initially baptized in the Spirit both at Pentecost and at The Ark and The Dove, we are called to grow in holiness and to use every divine appointment to share the Good News of God's love with signs and wonders as our credentials. We cannot be satisfied with the present status quo of remaining comfortable in our small clubs of security. Instead we are mandated to fill the banquet of the Kingdom by going to the highways and byways proclaiming God's invitation to come to the feast.

Pentecost Today, Bishop Sam Jacobs, Retired Bishop Emeritus of Houma-Thibodaux, LA. Winter, 2017. 50th Anniversary Jubilee Issue.



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*Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of
Thy faithful and
enkindle in them
the fire of Thy love.
Send forth Thy Spirit
and they shall be
created and Thou
shall renew the face
of the earth.
AMEN*

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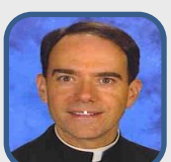
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