

Feast of Pentecost – Cycle A
Our Lady of the Woods, Dubois
May 30-31

- I. When we read secular newspapers today, or listen to news reports on television or radio, there is lots of bad news. There is a rise in crime rates and in the prison population in our country. There is bloodshed in many parts of the world. There is an increase in various forms of addictions: addiction to alcohol, other drugs, gambling and pornography, to mention a few.**
- A. If we try to build a life and a future on all the bad news we hear, we could easily fall into discouragement and even despair.**
 - B. If we spend lots of time and energy looking for the devil and the devil's work in the world today, we will find the devil and will find him working in many different areas of life and in society.**
 - C. If we spend lots of time and energy trying to find God and find God's grace at work in the world today, we will find God and find much evidence of God working in the world today. There is a promise from Jesus, "Seek and you shall find." You and I need to decide whether we want to spend our lives trying to find God or find the devil.**
 - D. When we listen to what God is doing in the world, the reports are hopeful and inspirational. We can build our lives and our future on the Good News and know that victory will be our reward.**
 - E. After much preaching and teaching, Jesus had built up a huge following during the three years of His public ministry. Because He was crucified at the young age of 33, His followers wondered what would happen to them and to His huge following, and to the great work He had started: Who would be healing the sick, preaching to those who felt lost, raising the dead back to life, forgiving sins, releasing those who were bound up by evil spirits, and feeding the hungry?**
 - F. At first, it seemed that the kingdom He came to establish here on earth would fall apart. The disciples of Jesus felt like failures after death of Jesus because they were powerless to prevent the crucifixion of their Teacher.**
 - G. The disciples welcomed the news that Jesus had been raised from the dead. Jesus had told them that He would return to God the Father**

so that He could send the Second Advocate. The Second Advocate was the Holy Spirit.

1. The Risen Lord Jesus told his disciples to go to Jerusalem to pray and to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them.
2. Jesus had given them a commission, "Go out to all the nations to preach the Good News, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit."
3. Jesus had appeared to the apostles after His resurrection to empower them with the Holy Spirit so that they could forgive sins.
4. The apostles and other disciples believed that the Virgin Mary had conceived the Christ Child through the power of the Holy Spirit.

H. When the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples at Pentecost, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Their fear was lifted so that they could speak boldly about the things that Jesus had said and done.

1. They felt empowered to pray for healing in the same way Jesus had healed the sick and suffering.
2. The disciples were set free of their fear of persecution and of death.

I. What happened at that Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit was the birthday of the Church. The Spirit came upon those gathered as a strong, driving wind. The world would never be the same again.

J. After being filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles would step out in great faith in the Risen Lord Jesus, so that the apostles could also pray for healing of the sick and suffering that were brought to them.

1. People were being healed in the name of the Risen Lord Jesus.
2. The healing power of Jesus Christ that was given to the early Church to heal the sick and suffering is still available to us today. Every time we pray for healing, the Lord heals and sometimes He cures.

II. Today, in the midst of all the bad news that we keep hearing, we are being encouraged to pray for a new and fresh out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church and the world.

A. We need a new and fresh out-pouring of the Holy Spirit today to help us with the new evangelization. Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and now Pope Francis are speaking strong words of encouragement for all Catholics to get involved in the work of evangelization: clergy, religious, and laity, young and old.

B. There is a deep spiritual hunger and a deep spiritual thirst among people to hear a message of reconciliation, healing and hope. People want to hear testimonies from Christians who have seen God

work in their lives, who have experienced personal healing, who have been set free of an addiction.

- 1. People want to hear personal accounts of how the Lord has restored broken marriages, how the Lord has set someone free from bondage and slavery to some grave sin, and how the Lord has healed strained relationships among family members.**

C. Personal stories of healing and reports of miracles are common among members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal that has been in existence since the late 1960's.

D. If you have the opportunity to attend a Catholic Charismatic prayer meeting sometime, I would encourage you to attend. In fact, I would encourage you to attend at least 3 prayer meetings before you decide whether this is for you or not.

- 1. You will find that Charismatics have a deep love for the Scriptures, and they know how to pray out loud spontaneously.**
- 2. Some have the spiritual gift of praying in tongues, or singing in tongues. Others have the gift of giving a word of knowledge or prophecy.**
- 3. The charismatic gift of praying in tongues has been present in the Catholic Church since the beginning. One can read about this gift in the lives of saints, but it seemed that it wasn't a gift intended for the ordinary Catholic. This gift is for ordinary Catholics, also.**
- 4. All the charisms of the Holy Spirit are intended for the benefit of the whole church. All gifts of the Holy Spirit need to be accepted, developed and then used for the glory of God and for the benefit of the Christian community.**

E. A few years ago, Pope Francis addressed a crowd of more than 50,000 Catholic Charismatics in Rome's Olympic Stadium. The Pope referred to the family as the "domestic Church," the place where Jesus' presence grows in the love of spouses and in the lives of their children.

- 2. The Pope went on to say, "This is why the Enemy attacks the family so hard. The Devil doesn't like it, and tries to destroy it. May the Lord bless families and strengthen them during this crisis when the Devil wants to destroy them."**
- 3. Pope Francis also said that the Charismatic movement was begun by the Holy Spirit as "a current of grace in the Church and for the Church."**

Nothing is impossible with God. God is in control of the universe and everything in the universe. God has given us the Holy Spirit to lead us out of darkness and into His light. Do not be afraid.