

June 4, 2017 – Feast of Pentecost  
Fr. Larry Richards

Good morning! How are you? We are most blessed on this Pentecost Sunday and on the weekend of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and as we come and we celebrate this Pentecost and our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of our parish, we know that what Jesus tells us today on this Pentecost Sunday, as He says as the Father has sent me, so I send you. But to be a Christian, and to follow Jesus, means that we are people who are sent. And He sends us out to do His mission.

Again, too many Catholics, not you, everybody else outside of here, but too many Catholics figure that their job, that their number one job is to go to Mass on Sunday. And if they are faithful to that, that when they die, they get to go to heaven. That's a lie. It's just not true. You know, again, when I first got here as I told the story before, I wasn't even here two weeks and I got called into the Bishop's office. Surprise! Surprise! The old bishop's office, and because one of our parishioners had called me and I had said at one of the early masses here that it is not enough just to go to mass on Sunday to go to Heaven. And as she sat there and called and said what? As she called and she started arguing with me saying every pastor before you has said the only thing we got to do to go to heaven is go to daily mass, or go to weekly mass on Sunday. And I said, "I am sure that's not what they meant," "That's what they said" and she said. We went back and forth for 20 minutes, and you know I have the patience of Job, myself, I am a very patient man, but after about 20 minutes, I had it. And I says, "yes, they were all liars if that's all they said, is the only thing you have to do to go to heaven is go to mass on Sunday, yes they were liars". Well, she went crazy, and she called the bishop and says, "You know he yelled at me because I told him the only thing you have to do to go to Heaven is go to mass on Sunday."

So I got called up and I says, "Bishop, is that the only thing you have to do to go to heaven is go to mass on Sunday, because if that's all there is, I'm outta here, right?" I don't have to do anything, I can just show up for Mass an hour a week, but that's what most Catholics think. Come, do your thing and then you can be good. Nah, not even close. He sends us out to make disciples as the Father has sent Me so I send you. So every day we are called to be sent and the Holy Spirit when He comes upon us burns inside of us to be light to others. We're called to be this light in the darkness. When Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit today

in the Gospel, well He says, “Those whose sins you will forgive, go out and forgive sins, go out and bring others to me.”

So again as we talked about just a couple weeks ago, am I a person who knows that I am, by my following of Jesus, sent to other people to bring them to Christ. And so the question is, I want you to reflect on this week, what are you doing to reach out to people to bring the Holy Spirit to people, And I want to give you, I have written about it, I have talked about it here, but again just to give you some very practical things that everyone can start doing today, if you're not already doing it, we have been praying for the last nine (9) days for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, correct, in this Novena? And so when we pray for the Gift of the Holy Spirit, why do we pray for the Gift of the Spirit?

So that we can be sent on fire and the people can watch us burn. That the spirit would take control of us, that we then would be like the apostles and go forth and speak the love of God to other people. That's what we're called to do. So again, I would encourage you, if you're not already doing it, but that you do have a prayer to the Holy Spirit every day, and that you sit there like when I wake up in the morning, I sit there and say, “Use me this day for Your Glory”. Use me Spirit of the Living God, to bring others to You. Use me, so that if You and I begin there, use me Lord, use me for your Glory to bring other people to You and then as I have talked about before, I would encourage you, that the way we bring people to Jesus, is you first of all start writing their names down on a piece of paper, a prayer list. Specifically, if you don't have a prayer list that you pray with every day, I'd encourage you to let today be the day you start. And you write on a piece of paper the names of the people you pray for.

Now, of course, that would be your family members, that would be people in your neighborhood, but I would encourage you to pray specifically for people you don't like. For your enemies! Specifically, for people that you know that don't know the Lord Jesus Christ and you start praying for them by name, every day. Again when you do that, you become a spiritual magnifying glass and the grace of God, which is everywhere, focuses through you and sets these people on fire. But you need to do this in the order that I give you. You pray for them, and pray for them, and pray for them, and pray for them. The next thing you do to bring people to Jesus is you love them. And that means, even if they, you don't like that person, like Theresa the Little Flower used to do, one of the people in her order, in the convent, you know this Saint didn't like people, can you imagine? She couldn't stand this one other nun, so she went out of her way to be extra nice to her and to love her all the more because that's what Jesus does to her. So

what did the girl, the other nun, come to her and says, "Can I talk to you?" And the two of them talked and she says "what is it about me that you like so much, you're always so nice to me?" But she hated her. But she acted as if she loved her. Some would say that's hypocrisy. No, that's love. You love people into the church.

In fact, if you don't love people into the church, you keep your mouth shut. Don't you say a word about talking about your truth, let me tell you people, nobody cares about the truth, unless you love them first. So you don't go and speak the truth 'cause I don't want to go to hell, I am going to speak the truth to you. Nobody cares and nobody wants to hear it. If you don't have love for the people, never speak truth. Has everybody got that? Because too many people love to speak truth, 'cause I'm just saying, I'm just sticking up for what's right without love. That ain't the way God did it and it ain't the way we are going to do it.

The next thing you do, after you pray for them, and you love them, then you witness to them about what Jesus Christ has done in your life. And again, if you are afraid to do that, that's why you need the Holy Spirit. You ask the Holy Spirit to come and give you opportunity to do that. And so those are the people, specifically; if you sit there every morning and say, "Lord, use me today". You might be an instrument of salvation to someone that you just meet, if you pray for them, when you see them. One of the things, *The Greatest Salesman in the World*, it's a great book, and one of the things he would encourage us to do is when you look at somebody, when you first meet them, say in your heart, don't say it externally, you'll scare them; "I really love you". Everyone you meet, you look at them and in your heart, when you're meeting them, say, "I really love you." Again, don't say it out loud or they will sit there and think, "Oh, that's a weird one". But you love them and then if the time ever arrives, then you witness to them about Jesus.

The Spirit of the Living God comes to us so that we can bring others to Jesus. And so don't let this Pentecost be the end. Let this Pentecost be the beginning, as we begin our next 150 years or however many years the Lord gives us. Let us each of us decide from this day forward that I am going to be a Living Pentecost, that I am going to bring Jesus to the world, I am going to let the Holy Spirit use me, the Holy Spirit will set me on fire and people will watch me burn and then people will come to know Jesus Christ, and then when we are all said and done, when we drop dead, we can stand before God, and say "Lord every day of my life, from that Pentecost Sunday, I tried with all my heart to bring

everybody I met to you.” I promise you, that day, you will hear “Well done, Good and Faithful Servant”. And in the end, isn’t that what we all want to hear? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.