

Pentecost Sunday

Sometimes you just have to “let loose”. That’s what Pentecost is all about. God “lets loose” the Spirit upon the disciples and their tongues are “loosed” and their limbs are “loosed” as they boldly proclaim that Jesus is Risen and everyone “gets it”. Everyone within earshot hears them speaking in his/her own language and they understand.

So I’m going to ask you this Pentecost day to “let loose”. I think you all have done or seen a “wave” at sports events. I’m going to ask you to create a “wave” during a song that I’m going to play. All you need to do is just let go and let the Spirit take over!

(Kool and the Gang/ Celebrate plays) Fr. Bob and dancers dance, community does the wave 4 times)

Well I think the song was perfect for Pentecost since there is so much to celebrate. There’s a party going on right here! And the Holy Spirit is Cool! And we are the Gang!

Pentecost began for me yesterday as I celebrated with the Federation of the Sisters of Charity their 200th anniversary of the first founding in NYC on Mott St in 1817. Sisters of Charity from the US, Canada, Korea, Central America and India had gathered for their annual meeting and it was fitting that the Pentecost Vigil Mass took place at Old St Patrick’s, across the street where the sisters began their mission 200 years ago. I did feel somewhat uncomfortable knowing that I was in the presence of such a dynamic gathering of women religious and one of them was not presiding. I was humbled, however, just to be there. My first encounter with the ministry of the Charities was over 60 years ago when my Aunt worked for the Foundling and took me there on a visit.

As I thanked the Sisters for their ministry, I told them that we are in the midst of a clash of cultures. It’s not the clash between the secular and sacred but rather a clash between a culture of care and compassion and a culture of commodities. The sisters with their commitment to care for the poor, the immigrant, the victims of trafficking etc as well as their commitment to care for creation is in opposition to a culture of

commodity that idolizes wealth and power and uses the elements of the earth for its own benefit with great risk to the future of the planet. My second Pentecost moment came at Maria's Crisis, a bar in the Village which features a pianist and everyone singing along. I went at the invitation of one of our parishioners. At one point I said to him that I wished that Church could be as "enspirited" as this. Everyone was singing, celebrating, enjoying the company of each other. The Spirit was palpable. You can encounter the spirit in Church, on the streets of NY and in a place like Maria's Crisis. I was grateful for the invitation to another kind of "liturgy" that helped make my Pentecost.

The third Pentecostal moment came in the morning. I have always loved Pentecost because it's the day when God "pulls out all the stops" for us in Jesus Christ. For me the best expression of the Spirit is in the dance. And so the song "You should be dancing" popped into my head. Fortunately the Spirit was at work and she suggested Celebrate. And then came the idea of having you all do the Wave. Why the wave? Because everyone can be involved and it creates a powerful energy like the wind! How Pentecostal! But I was also thinking of the wave because of the following quote from a New York Times article this past week.

\Four days ago it was reported that contemporary astronomers had discovered for the first time "space-time vibrations" (known as gravitational waves) from mammoth black holes colliding three billion light years away from earth. The collision left behind a pit of infinitely deep darkness which they could measure. The mathematics predicted it according to Albert Einstein. But he thought no one would ever be able to actually record it or prove it was real. Well it is today. An astounding discovery.

Wow! One of the gifts of the Spirit is Awe and Wonder! This is the universe our God has created. And instead of trying to "control and capitalize on its resources" shouldn't we be in humbled by its majesty and serve creation rather than using it for our own devices?

Finally, let me share with you a quote from Jesuit Theologian Karl Rahner as he speaks of Pentecost.

Pentecost completes Easter. For Pentecost is the completion of all the saving events celebrated during the Easter Season. At Pentecost, with the coming of the Holy Spirit:

“God is [now] ours. God has not merely given us a gift, a gift created and finite like ourselves. No, God has given us his whole being without reserve; God has given us the clarity of God’s knowledge, the freedom of God’s love, and the bliss of God’s Trinitarian life. God has given us God’s self. And God’s name is Holy Spirit.”

Amen! Alleluia!