

Come, Light My Fire

Intro. Pentecost was one of the three great Jewish pilgrimage feasts. It was celebrated fifty days after Passover and commemorated God making a covenant with Israel, giving Moses the commandments on Mount Sinai. That moment was accompanied by thunder, smoke and fire [Exodus 19]. The same signs were present on the new Pentecost.

I. Devout Jews came to Jerusalem from all over the world to celebrate. The city was filled with people coming from the great temple. There were the usual sights, sounds and smells that accompany the big celebrations of our time such as Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day or New Year's Eve. Scripture tells us the disciples were not out enjoying the party atmosphere, but together in a house, waiting. They

didn't know what they were waiting for; only that the Lord several times told them not to leave Jerusalem. That day the power of the Holy Spirit must have been like a burst of energy that *electrified* the disciples. Earlier in the scriptures the disciples were described as being filled with fear. Despite scary things like the loud sound of wind and things resembling flames of fire over their heads, there is no mention of fear. They seemed at peace. People who have an experience of the Holy Spirit have described just that: a serene feeling of being safe and at peace. The experience of the Spirit literally *propelled* the disciples out of the house and into the street where a crowd just happened to be gathered. All part of God's plan. The people were amazed by the testimony of these men and women, some from Galilee, of all places, speaking the different

languages of the world. I wonder what the disciples were feeling as this was happening. Fear was gone, joy filled them as never before. If you have been to a charismatic prayer gathering, you can see what it does. *Amazing*. I often wondered why there was a gap between the Lord's resurrection/ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Maybe it was so it would coincide when Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem. What a distribution system! It was genius. What a great way to get the Good News of the Lord to all the world than putting it in the hearts and minds of people going home to Mesopotamia, Egypt and all those far away places. FedEx and UPS would have admired such a logistics plan.

Concl. The second Pentecost, the one we celebrate today, was a renewal of that first covenant between God and the Israelites, but a very important one also:

the Gentiles were now made part of that covenant relationship with God [Ray Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1996].

After it was over, I wonder if any of the disciples looked at each other and said, “**Wow! Let's do that again!**” When have we felt that fired up about something or someone? For some it might be riding a really big roller coaster. Falling in love might be another experience; or winning a musical or athletic contest. A retreat like CHRP. For me one was catching some really big salmon in Alaska. And celebrating Mass for the first time with my family and friends. A challenge for us today is how to recapture the energy and excitement of our Pentecost experiences and use them to re-light the fire of God in ourselves and breathe life into a world that needs to be brought back to life in God.