

A Wing and A Promise

Intro. This time of year is filled with farewells. The school year draws to a close and many people disperse for vacation and various arts or sports camps, not to see each other for several months. Graduates leave friends and classmates after four or more years together, never to see some again. But we remember the experiences and friendships in our hearts. In the gospel, the disciples are facing something similar – the Lord told them *he* was leaving after three, intense years together, and they were not sure they would see him again. He told them he had a gift for them to remember him.

I. They were probably uncertain and possibly scared about the future. Were they going back to fishing, collecting taxes and whatever else they were doing before they met the Lord? The Lord talked

about something called an “advocate,”- the Holy Spirit - which would teach and remind them of all he said. They might not have understood it then. I wouldn’t have.

However, on the day of Pentecost, it all came together. Their fears and lack of confidence vanished. They spoke and acted boldly for the Lord. As Fr. Mike Joly said last week, the Lord was “*in them, not outside of them.*”

That is what caused the disciples to go all over the world as we heard in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. It also led them to make one of the most monumental decisions in the church’s entire history. They were so successful in spreading the news of salvation for all, it caused a major discussion about whether the Gentiles needed to accept all the Jewish traditions and religious

practices. The community in Antioch sent representatives to ask for a decision. The Apostles gathered in Jerusalem and heard how the Holy Spirit opened the hearts of Gentiles. The verse, “There arose no little dissension and debate,” is too bland. It means there was *a whole lot of dissension and debate!* It was a difficult decision because it was *change!* They prayed together asking the Holy Spirit to guide them. The decision was crucial to opening the teachings of the Lord to a wider world: the Gentiles would not have to follow all the Jewish practices, just avoid certain pagan customs. This is what Pope Francis asked for in the recent Synod gatherings of the church: listen, discuss, pray.

Concl. When any of us move on from one part of our lives to another, there can be excitement, but also uncertainty about what we will do and who will

become an important part of our lives. Should we stay close to home or venture away. Over the years, mostly without knowing it, we have received a lot of knowledge and learned many skills that will help us in our next step. Remembering the support we have been given by parents, teachers and friends is important. The disciples were promised a going away gift by the Lord: a Holy Spirit that would be in them. They trusted in his promise and it gave them wings to travel to places they never could have imagined when they stood on the shore of Galilee and first answered the Lord’s call. **We can have the peace he promised and the confidence that we can do well wherever we go, if we allow the Lord to be in us and in all we do.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft
Sixth Sunday, Easter, 2022