

Homily for Pentecost Sunday

May 19-20, 2018

Readings: Acts 2: 1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3B-7, 12-13; John 20: 15:26-27; 16:12-15

Preacher: Patrick Fox

What prism do we chose for embracing the great mysteries?

One of the Gospels for Pentecost is John 15:26-27; 16:12-15 wherein Jesus speaks of the role of the Spirit.

Pope Francis has added a Marian Feast for the day following Pentecost and the prescribed Gospel for the feast is John 19:25-31, which is the scene at the crucifixion with the women gathered at the foot of the cross.

That led me into a reflection of why we connect these two feasts. I believe it is because we are being called to a deeper understanding of what it means to believe.

The western world wants so often to rely almost solely on the intellect. While our gift of intellect is a powerful tool we have been given to foster the growth of knowledge it is by itself a bit inept when it comes to fostering our growth in faith.

More tools are needed and the connection of the two feasts is, I think a model for those gifts.

On Pentecost the Disciples, men and women, were assured of an advocate. Assured that God does not leave us but abides and will stand with us on our journey.

On the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God we are offered not just a woman but as the Eastern Churches have proclaimed for years the, "theotokos," "God bearer."

That got me to reflecting on how Mary bore Jesus. Most certainly as the woman who bore the divine life into human form as reflected in her response to an angel

and a birth in Bethlehem. She also bore Jesus in a trip to the temple, in the life journey of his public ministry—including the last supper—and as the chosen Gospel for the feast on the day following today at the foot of the cross and afterward in what appears to be a quiet life of prayer and support for the early community of believers.

Our desire to know can overwhelm our resting in faith. I want to suggest that by coupling these two feasts we might find a better balance for the faith journey. We are assured of the continued constant support of a loving God by the gift of an Advocate, a presence more than a concept. That is coupled with a model of humanity whose greatest gift may have been her intuitive sense that modeled for us acceptance, perseverance, fortitude, anxiety, perplexity, and humility.

Faith is a journey and we culminate the Easter Season with the Feast of Pentecost often called the Birthday of the Church. I think in an added feast we have a celebration of one model of one member of the Church. A deeply human model, a mother, a companion, a disciple, a person who most of all reminds me that I am called on to be a “theotokos” each day of my life and that is more than a mental effort, it is like Mary, a lived experience which requires model and support. Today and tomorrow we are put in touch with both gifts the advocate and the “theotokos.” May we rest in each and draw energy to pursue our faith journey in light of each. Peace