



From the Office of the President

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REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

Homily for the Feast of Pentecost (B)
Chapel of St. John Francis Regis, Regis University
Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11
1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13
John 20:19-23
May 24, 2015

If there is a set of readings that is meant for all times and circumstances, all persons and conditions of persons: rich and poor, woman and man, black, white, and brown, this is the set.

If Pentecost was the beginning of the Church, it was a beginning out of frailty, division, and fear. The disciples were huddled in fear behind closed doors. It seemed their "schooling" in discipleship was not for life but for self-preservation!

Yet Pentecost unleashed a courageous power. Driven by the Spirit of God and fire in the soul, each disciple was set loose upon the world - not to hide her or his gifts but to sew them into the real world and cultivate them into fruitfulness. The disciples were sent to be bold, to be holy and strong in a cynical world that is familiar with fragmentation and fear.

Thus the call each one of us inherits in the Church today. We are called to unity and courage.

Notice from the Acts of the Apostles that the Spirit of God brought unity, not only in a shared reminder, a starting point of fear and smallness, but also the common experience of faith in Jesus, trust in the one he loved who said he would not abandon them. It was a faith that put them in touch with their deepest humanity and enabled them to speak every language because, in the end, there is only one language, the language of the human heart. They would now boldly speak a universal tongue, in a way that would touch the hearts of all persons.

Such unity is born of simplicity, as Paul emphasizes in his First Letter to the Corinthians, It is precisely this simplicity and openness which allows for the strength of unity- not uniformity- of hearts and minds. "There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in every one."



The second part of the gift of the Spirit is courage. You already have that virtue or you would not be here. Each and every faith-filled community is a paradox. Let me be a bit particular for the sake of clarity and speak of this Regis community. Regis University like every school worthy of the name, must be a paradox. It takes courage to live a paradox. You see, the members of the Regis University community know that it's possible to enter with faith and leave agnostic or, worse, cynical; enter naive, leave angry; start warm, end cold; begin by growing your faith, and then lose it. While all of us work mightily to build faith and mutually support one another, we know that we each run the risk.

Why? What makes the risk worth it? What is hidden in those millions of syllables we teach from believers and non-believers, synthesizers and iconoclasts? It is simply this: Regis University always hands a community member herself. We exist to reveal ways and truths and lives lived out of unity and courage in the Spirit of God. Regis asks each person to receive himself, to fall so in love with learning that you never stop learning, to trust that the God Who sends God's own Spirit never abandons us but calls us further.

Clearly, there is a risk here. A childish faith must be challenged to deepen, ripen, and mature. While we guard the faith of the little ones, we challenge all to grow. It is the nature of a university and it is our mission. That process requires a sophistication that always assaults simple answers, partial truths, and spiritual timidity. Yet, the process here also supports, consoles, and protects. Moreover, the end of this time is not the end of the process. Rather, it is the beginning. That's why we call graduation "commencement."

Unity and courage are born of fruitful cultivation and simplicity. You need not be overly anxious. Remember Jesus words in the Upper Room, "Peace be with you."