

**Mass of Pentecost**  
**Homily by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez**  
**Vigil – St. Catherine of Siena**  
**Holy Spirit Parish and the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine**  
**June 7 & 8, 2014**

Lord, send out your spirit and renew the face of the earth!!

The cantor sings “Breath of God, be now in me, search of vital energy.” Today, we join the entire church in the completion of the 50 days celebration of the Paschal Mystery. We exalt in the praise of song for the gift of gifts, the light of light: the Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit come, renew the face of the earth.

Charles Peguy, a renowned French Catholic writer, said there is but one suffering and that is of not being a saint. I could say that there is but one sadness, and that is the sadness of committing a sin. Our clear purpose is found in Ephesians 1:4 “God chose us in him before the world began to be holy and blameless in his sight, to be full of love.” The best version of our true self is to be holy. To be holy is not to be a rare individual, to be holy is not to be better than thou, to be holy is not to have the looks of an extraterrestrial creature. To be holy is to develop all the gifts of our baptism when we became a temple of the Holy Spirit, as St. Paul writes.

With powerful images, Ezekiel said something about us as if we were bones without souls: “I will bring the spirit into you that you may come to life... Oh spirit breathe into these that they may come to life... I will put my spirit in you that you may live.” That is why the Paraclete, our defender, comes to our aid and intercedes for us so that we can truly receive holiness of life.

Come Holy Spirit, make us alive in you, renew us in depth, and renew the face of the earth in reaching society and Church with your gifts and ministries. On the eve of Pentecost in the Year of the Holy Spirit – 1998 –

His Holiness, John Paul II said in the homily: “we experience the atmosphere of Pentecost which made visible in away the spirits in exhaustible fruitfulness in the Church. The movements, the new communities are providential expressions of the new springtime brought forth by the Spirit with the Second Vatican Council, announced the power of God’s love which in overcoming divisions and barriers of every kind, renews the face of the earth to build the civilization of love.” John Paul II recognized that the Holy Spirit gives wonderful charisms and gifts in lay associations and movements to spread the Gospel anew, renewing the Church in new places as a fruit of evangelization, the Spirit is the main actor of the greater involvement of the people of God especially of the laity.

Today, I pray for you to receive two graces. The first is to pray for **docility**. Holy Mother Church frequently asks for docility in regards to the Holy Spirit. It means not to interfere with what the Holy Spirit wants for us. At times, our fears hinder the breath, the wind moving us to action. As Cardinal John Henry Neumann prayed, lead me kindly light, lead me on. Docility is to be allowed to be led by light of the Spirit. Docility is so closely related to openness and listening to the Word of God. Mary is the exemplar; as she said, “let it be done according to thy word”. No wonder Luke says that she kept the word in her heart. With Mary, we are to echo within the hymn: “Breathe in me breathe of God that I may love what thou does love and do what thou would do, breathe in me breath of God until my heart is pure and until with thee I will be one... will to do and to endure.”

The second grace: Allow to be led by **the seven gifts** of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a river of grace. As the Gospel says tonight “ he shall drink water which I will give him, a well of water springing into everlasting life”. This well is clearly the grace of the Spirit, a stream flowing from the living font. The Holy Spirit is also the font of eternal life... let it spring up in me, let that which gives eternal life flow from the depth within.

As you are aware the gifts of the Holy Spirit were revealed by Prophet Isaiah. ( Is:11:2-3)

The seven gifts are special gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Confirmandi and to the entire church. They are: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel ( or right judgment). St. Paul talks about acquiring the mind of Christ. These four particular gifts form in us the mind of Christ. There is also the gift of fortitude enabling us to act as soldiers of Christ, to fight temptations, to say no to the insinuations of the evil one; the gift of piety enables us to worship... to sing and praise, and finally, the gift of fear of the Lord, also known as wonder and awe which is so related to a personal love of God to such an extent that we do not want to offend him, we are amazed in wonder and awe for his goodness. Thomas of Aquinas said the gifts direct the will toward God. Isn't it true that at times our will is rebellious? Come Holy Spirit... heal us with your gifts so that our wills may be attuned to the will of the Father. We make many decisions isn't it true? Have you counted how many decisions you make each day? These decisions affect the lives of our families and communities. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are very important for they help us to make good decisions. For St. Paul, this is called "discernment of the spirits". We are dealing always with many options and many ideas. We need to sort them out with the light of the Spirit.

As Bishop of this Diocese, which carries the name, not only of a city, but of a saint or stated differently, a city with the name of a saint: St. Augustine? ... Let me quote him with his prayer:

*Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.*

*Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.*

*Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.*

*Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.*

*Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen.*