

WHILE YOU AND I ARE WAITING THE SPIRIT IS A-BLOWIN'

What do you do when you are waiting? In line to pick up the kids? In line at the grocery store waiting to be rung up? In a line of traffic when someone has blocked the intersection because they weren't paying attention or didn't think of how they would inconvenience others until it was too late? What do you do while you are waiting? Listen to music? Check your cellphone? Go through your mental To Do list? What do I do? I pray. I pray the Hail Mary. I try not to race through the Hail Mary. I just try to pray it from my heart and not just say the words. I pray in little bits. It does more than help me pass the time. It helps me be a better me. I pray for people who have asked me for prayers. I pray for situations I am aware of. I pray for people whose lives are a mess right now, including famous people. I pray for people who have lost their loved ones. Just simple prayer. Prayer For.

Why do I do this? "Well, you're a priest and priests are supposed to pray." True. But before I was a priest, like you I am baptized into Christ and am supposed to pray because of my baptism. After all, the Lord taught the Our Father so that everyone could pray it and anyone could pray it. I just want you to think about what you do while you are waiting and to consider using that time as a small window of prayer. It has really helped me. It centers me. It reminds me. It graces me. It calms me. It restores me. It helps others. AND. It opens me to the Holy Spirit. Even praying the Hail Mary does that because no one was more open to the Holy Spirit than Mary was.

She is there in the Upper Room with the apostles, some men and women disciples. She is encouraging them both by being with them and praying with them. While they were all gathered in the Upper Room they are waiting. They don't really know what they are waiting for or what to expect but they know they should be praying. If we really stop to think about it, we know that too. They do this for nine days from the day Jesus ascends to his Father until the day when Father and Son, reunited in the glory of the kingdom, breathe forth their Spirit upon the apostles and disciples in that same room where Jesus ate the Last Supper and gave us the Eucharist.

Up until the Ascension Jesus was WITH his followers. After Pentecost, He will be WITHIN his followers. And that my friends is the heart of the meaning of the feast of Pentecost. Jesus changes the way He is with us. But He is most definitely still with us. He doesn't just desire to be WITH us though. He desires to be WITHIN us. To abide. To Indwell. And we are made in such a way that this is possible. It is not only possible that the Spirit indwells us. It is real. Why don't we feel it then? Why don't we recognize it then? That takes time. It takes prayer. It takes assistance. And sometimes we are too much in pursuit of the things we like and are interested in that we do not put in the time to learn the ways of the Spirit. And sometimes we don't have enough holy people around to help us learn the ways.

But I submit to you that there are areas of your life where you have given God's Spirit room to act in you. There are areas where you and the Spirit have formed a bond. Where is that? Where are you your own best self? When are you your own best self? Is it in your role as mother

or father? Is it as spouse? Is it as friend? Is it in running a household? Is that where you are your best self? Is it in making those thousand little sacrifices for your loved ones that no one knows about? Is that your best self? Are you a good listener? Are you someone who really cares? Is being a faithful person when you are your best self? For me, my best self is in my preaching, my praying and my compassion. I submit to you that in those areas where you are your best self you have cooperated with the Holy Spirit. I know that I have in those areas.

The Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete. The Advocate. But there are some other words that are descriptive. The Holy Spirit is gift. Not A gift. The Gift—of the Father and Son. The Holy Spirit is the One who brings good things to completion, to fulfillment, to perfection. The Holy Spirit is the Completer. Think about this: The Holy Spirit will finish your unfinished business. The Holy Spirit is finishing Our Lord's unfinished business.

On the other side of things, can you identify an area of your life where you are not your own best self? Where you do things you wish you didn't do? Where you do not like yourself very much or the way you are? And now I ask you, could it be that you have not allowed the Holy Spirit to bond with you in that area? In the area of your purity, your humility or your trust? In the area of generosity, forgiveness, care, or living the truth? Then choose. Choose to allow the Spirit that is already within you to enter into that area where you have struggled so long. One thing the Spirit can do is transform things. It is the Spirit that transforms bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Spirit transformed the fear of those in the Upper Room into a wonderful confidence. They were changed from those who were so anxious about what might happen to them to not caring what happened to them. I have seen wariness be changed into trust, doubt into conviction. The Spirit is the Finisher. The Completer.

God has done his part. Now it is our time, our turn. Pray this in your heart with me.

“O Holy Spirit, Beloved of my soul, gift of the Father and gift of the Son holy, abiding and sanctifying presence. I adore You. Please unite with my soul to create a beautiful Indwelling for the Father and the Son. Lead me to the Father's Will. May I embrace the Father's Will. Live the Father's Will. Love the Father's Will.

Thank you for your enlightenment, your guidance and your consolation Spirit of the Living God fall afresh on me so that all I say and think and do may give the Father praise and lead me to grow in my love for Christ with all my heart and soul and mind and strength, now and forever. Amen.”

That prayer is based on a prayer written by Cardinal Mercier a Belgian bishop and scholar who lived about one hundred years ago. He said: “If you do this your life will flow serenely, even in the midst of trials. This submission to the Holy Spirit...is the secret of sanctity.” I believe it to be so.