

JUST HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK?

Friday night at 6pm was our Pre-K prom. It lasted one hour. From 6 to 7pm and then it was over. No parents were allowed in. The little ones 4 going on 5 were all present in their “good” clothes and then given a colorful Hawaiian Lei when they arrived. At six they processed downstairs into the Multipurpose Room. There was some music and some munchies before the pizza was served. There was some bashfulness but not too much because they all knew each other from the PreK. They ran around and jumped and danced. And the whole thing wrapped up in time to get them all home and to bed at a decent hour. There was such love and such excitement in these little kids and their moms and dads and the Staff. The Holy Spirit was there. Love aplenty. Togetherness. Happiness. Joy. Fun. Breaking of bread. Friendship. That is what the Holy Spirit does. That is the way the Holy Spirit works. That is who the Holy Spirit is.

Before the PreK Prom I had a wedding rehearsal and yesterday I had a wedding. First marriage for the bride, second for the groom. He had been married a while and lost his wife in death. He is now in his mid-60’s and his new bride perhaps ten years younger. They are very good together. There is a simplicity and an attentiveness that is appealing and sweet. He never thought he would get married again; she had considered marriage but the right guy never came along and so that was a chapter of her book of life that she had finished—or so she thought. And then they met. And they liked each other. And enjoyed being with each other and enjoyed doing things together. And they became friends, good friends. And the best of friends.

And then there they were actually considering marriage which neither had been actively seeking but which now seemed to be beckoning them, summoning them even. They shared a great love for their Catholic faith and it has made all the difference in their adult lives and so they had a Nuptial Mass yesterday and I was the celebrant as they conferred the Sacrament of Matrimony upon each other. I imparted the Nuptial Blessing. He is from the western part of the Commonwealth and many of his invited guests turned out to be the relatives and family members of his first wife. That touched me. But it was evident that his first wife’s family loved him, knew that he had been a good husband for their family member and they truly wished him well. They wanted to celebrate his joy. Enough to travel completely across the state and be present for his new Marriage.

There was an additional piece. Yesterday was my 45th anniversary of ordination. So I chose to wear the vestments from my First Mass that I referenced in my homily last week. My mother had made them out of her wedding dress and so what had once been nuptial in the sense of Matrimony had been transformed into something Eucharistic but still a wedding garment for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb of God. At the Mass I spoke about how that simple fabric of slipped satin had been transformed by the expertise, devotion and skill emanating from the heart and hands of my mother into something exquisitely different but just as loving—a set of vestments. Marriage is thoroughly and fundamentally about such transformations—from the heart and hands of the lover and the beloved. Especially the transformation of the two into one.

Why do I go into all of this on the feast of Pentecost? Because the Holy Spirit is all over yesterday's wedding and its surrounding events. And that PreK Prom. While not looking for a spouse neither had closed themselves to love—given and received. And so when love presented itself they went with it. That is what the Holy Spirit does. That is how the Holy Spirit works. That is who the Holy Spirit is. But the working of the Spirit in us and in our life situations is subtle and not immediately evident. Love was born anew yesterday. Love was born anew the night before too. That is precisely what the Spirit of the Living God, Father and Son, is about in our world. That couple was part of it. And so were those kids. And all the guests? They didn't have to come but they did come. It was a choice they made. No one would have begrudged them if they chose not to participate. He had been married to their family member and she was now gone. Everyone would have understood.

But what this life is about is not just understanding. What this life is about is love being born anew and participating in it and celebrating it all the time. And when we do that it touches us, changes us, transforms us into more loving and caring and considerate persons than we were before. Yes, it takes effort and yes, it costs us, and yes, it is clearly the extra mile. But for all those who gave themselves to the events of yesterday, they are part of what the Spirit of the Living God is doing day in and day out on the face of this earth.

My friends these signs are all around us. In the little ones and in the big ones. The Holy Spirit was visible aplenty in these environs yesterday and today too. Let us ask the Lord not only to help us keep our eyes open but more than that, our hearts too. In the Spirit of the Living God.