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A Pentecost Ordination

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A Pentecost Ordination

Fr Robert di Nardo CSSp
with family members and
Bishop Vincent Nguyen.



Robert di Nardo

First Canadian Spiritan in 26 Years

Bernard Kelly CSSp

Cari fratelli e sorelle, buongiorno. Parlo appena italiano, ma provo bene accogliere la famiglia di Roberto: le due sorelle, Lucy e Neela, e tutta le loro famiglie. Siamo reuniti oggi, domenica di Pentecoste, per celebrare la prima messa di Roberto, messa dello Spirito Santo, fonte di coraggio, di forza e di gioia.

Relax everybody, don't go trying to change the channel. From now on everything will be in English. This was just a little introductory effort to welcome Robert's family.

Pentecost – Babel reversed

Have you ever been in a situation where you were unable to understand anything?

I have. Once in a faraway place I felt particularly helpless. I was in Tokyo in a railway station. I didn't know what platform I should look for. I knew no Japanese. I couldn't understand the announcements, I couldn't read the signs. It was a huge relief when someone who knew English came to my rescue.

It gave me a new appreciation of that story in the Book of Genesis – the story of the Tower of Babel? The people decide to build a tower to the sky, reaching to heaven. No need of God. We can do it. They make a great start. Then they find that they can no longer understand each other. All communication breaks down. The people go their own way and the tower project is abandoned.

Pentecost is the reversal of the Tower of Babel. It is the saving of the situation. The Holy Spirit arrives on the scene in the form of tongues of fire. The disciples forget the fear that has held them captive and openly proclaim the Good News that Christ is risen. And people from very different language groups all get the message.

Spreading the Good News has begun. Soon it became clear that it was not just a question of language. The Holy Spirit was at the heart of it. He would form genuine missionaries:

- to be at the service of others without discrimination
- to share the truth in charity, to be of help without condemnation
- to give thanks, to share, to bless ...



We may only slowly learn to speak other peoples' languages, but our generosity, our encouragement, our joy speak to them.

A new beginning

Unexpected things had happened to the apostles. Spectacular reports were coming in. Jesus is alive, he is risen from the dead. There was excitement and danger ... but also weariness. They were tired.

They were in the throes of a huge readjustment; trying to see how a major setback could be the start of a new beginning.

We all know the feeling. Hopes have been dashed, discouragement is taking hold.

It was hard to believe stories that Jesus had risen from the dead. The atmosphere was threatening. Better to have the protection of fellow believers, to stay indoors and pray together. Heavy weariness had set in.

Then came the wind in great gusts – the tongues of fire – the call to come out of hiding – the challenge to go public.

Today we celebrate their courage and the wonder of it all.

A Pentecost Ordination

The fact that Robert is being ordained at Pentecost does not happen by accident. He has been a fully-fledged Spiritan for years. The Holy Spirit is the patron of the Spiritans, the one to whom we look in a special way. We gather here to pray for and with Robert. And we have our own hopes and prayers.

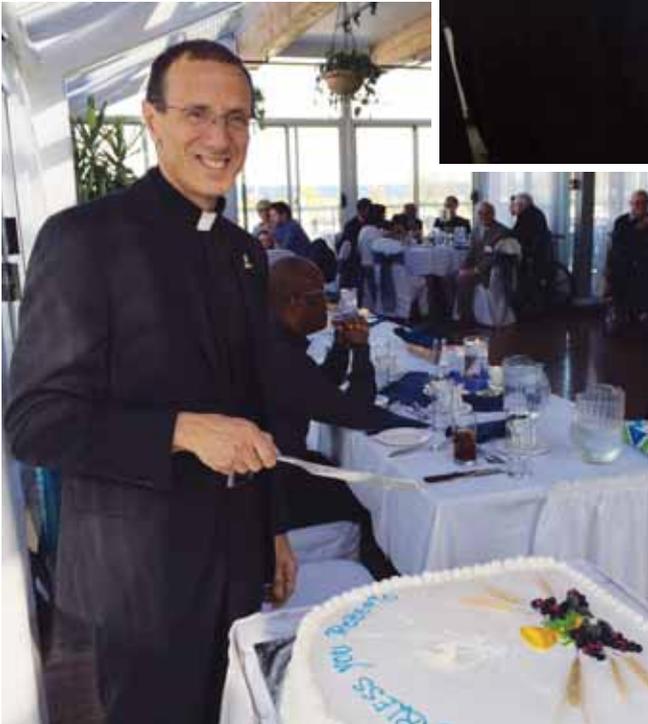
The Spirit comes to each of us and works in each of us. This is clear from today's reading from I Corinthians:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Your presence here underlines the fact that Robert is not setting out on a solitary crusade. The same Spirit that guides and protects him guides and protects each of us. The same Spirit that urges him on brings disturbance to our pursuit of the comfortable quiet life.

A visit of the risen Christ to the disciples

The message is for each of us but in a special way for Robert. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."



Pentecost Sunday:
Fr Robert di Nardo's first Mass.



By becoming a minister of the Lord's forgiveness, Robert will become a channel of the Lord's peace for people. Maybe we can follow him in this. Maybe this gospel is asking each of us to forgive someone. In this way we give them fresh life. It's in the spirit of the day.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

The Sequence in today's Mass is a classic:

*Bend the stubborn heart and will.
Melt the frozen, warm the chill.
Guide the steps that go astray*

We have a traditional Spiritan prayer borrowed from Francis Libermann, one of our founders.

In 1840, he was writing a commentary on the gospel of John. He was

fascinated by Jesus' interview with Nicodemus and the reference to the elusive presence of the Holy Spirit being like the wind, sometimes a gust, sometimes just a breath. One sentence of his commentary on this incident has become a Spiritan prayer:

*Divine Spirit, I wish to be before you
as a light feather,
So that your breath may carry me off
where it wishes
And that I may never offer it the
least resistance.*

We give thanks for the coming of the Holy Spirit. He is our Advocate, God on our side. We give thanks for Robert, our principal celebrant, offering his first Mass. We pray that others join the path he has chosen. Hello Canada! ■

