**SOLEMN FEAST OF PENTECOST [8th June, 2014]**

**READINGS: Acts 2:1-11 / 1 Cor. 12:3-7, 12-13 / John 20:19-23**

**THEME: PENTECOST**

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

In less than a week, the world cup will begin. It will begin, as usual, with an opening ceremony during which there will be a spectacular display of Brazilian culture and modern technology, including fireworks. Why the need for such a spectacular opening ceremony? It is meant to draw the attention of the world to the beginning of a special event. Similarly, through the Holy Spirit, God inaugurated in a spectacular way the church He has established through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The spectacles of Pentecost included a sound ‘from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind’ and the fireworks of ‘tongues of fire’ (Acts 2:2-3). The spectacular storm from heaven did the “trick”: the several of the thousands of people who had gone to Jerusalem for the Jewish feast were attracted to the location of the apostles of Christ.

As the spectacular opening ceremony will not be the primary purpose for gathering in Brazil, so the spectacles of Pentecost are not an end in themselves. As the primary purpose for Brazil 2014 is the World Cup competition and the winning of the trophy, so the primary purpose for inaugurating the church on Pentecost Day is the proclamation of the Good News of salvation and the winning of souls. Thus, when the crowd gathered, St. Peter – empowered by the Holy Spirit – powerfully proclaimed the Good News, and 3,000 souls were won on that very day (Acts 2:14-41). But that was only the beginning; for since then the Good News has been proclaimed for centuries and millions of souls have been won for Christ.

Beloved it is now our turn. We have also been given the gift of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Good News, so that other souls could be won for Christ. We received the Holy Spirit at baptism and He strengthened us in a special way when we received the Sacrament of Confirmation. If one is not sure that he/she still has the Holy Spirit, St. Paul gives a simple “test” to perform (*see* second reading). He says: “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:3). Beloved, do you believe that Jesus is Lord? If you answer “yes”, then you have passed the “test” – hurray! You still have the Holy Spirit! Alleluia!

Now if we have the Holy Spirit then we cannot still remain in the Upper Room. When the apostles were in the room (behind closed doors for fear of persecution), Jesus appeared to them and liberated them by giving them the Holy Spirit (*see* Gospel reading). Though, we have received the Holy Spirit, many of us are still in the Upper Room (behind closed doors for fear of the persecutions, e.g. ridicules about worship of statues, Mary, etc.). In other words, many of us are not courageous enough to proclaim the Good News to others. The gift of the Spirit has not been given to us for mere safekeeping. We are to use His empowerment, as Peter and co. did, to step out of our comfort zone to tell others about Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of mankind: for there is no other name by which one can be saved except the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

I pray: today, may the mighty stormy sound of the Holy Spirit break down the doors of our Upper Rooms, so we can move out to our family members, neighbours and friends who are yet to accept Jesus Christ! Amen! And may He, who descended on the apostles like tongues of fire and loosened their timid tongues to speak to people of various languages, loosen our tight lips so that we can sweetly proclaim the message of salvation! Amen!