

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Do you know what a Ouija board is? Some people think of it as a board game to pass a boring afternoon. Other people use it as a way of contacting Satan or some other spirit. I looked it up on the Walmart website because I was thinking I would buy one just to show you what it is, but the store couldn't get it in time for this week's sermon. There are letters on the Ouija board. Everyone who participates is asked to put their hands on a floating marker together and close their eyes. The participants are then invited to open their hearts to the spirit world and ask the spirit world to take control of their arms. Supposedly the spirits take control and move the marker around on the board to spell out messages. Christians are cautioned against playing with one of these boards because once you open the door of your heart to JUST ANY spirit you never know what kind of spirit is going to settle in your soul. I don't know why anyone who believes in Jesus would want one of these especially when Jesus has already told us He wants to be one with us. He wants to help us in every way as we live in this world.

A little over 2,000 years ago the followers of Jesus gathered together to celebrate a Jewish religious holiday, the Feast of Pentecost. These followers of Jesus sang songs, read scripture and placed themselves in the Presence of God. This was no board game. The spirit to whom they spoke was the Creator of the Universe. The spirit to whom they sang their hymns had delivered the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The people who had gathered on that first Pentecost knew exactly who was deserving of their attention and it is the God the Father in heaven.

Then something happened. No, messages were not spelled out on some stupid board game. The air began to move and grew into a mighty wind. There appeared to them what seemed to be balls of fire that hovered like tongues of flame over each of them. They were filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Presence of Jesus.

A few moments ago after our Old Testament reading you and I joined together with the cantor to sing the refrain after each verse from Psalm 104 was sung. Recall the words we sang together: "Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth." Our whole purpose for gathering today is to open up our hearts and minds to the spirit world. But unlike people who use the Ouija board we name the Spirit we want to communicate with. It is the Spirit of Jesus. We open up our hearts and minds to the Spirit of Jesus. We invite the Spirit of Jesus to become one with us.

Jesus said: *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you"* (Matthew 7:7). We, you and I, speak to Jesus today and ask Him to send us His Spirit that we might be made one.

Jesus encourages us to ask for this spirit. Right before he returned to heaven Jesus told us to expect his return in spirit form.

John 16: *But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." (v. 7) "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what I say and declare it to you. . .*

Did you hear that? Jesus said: "I have much more to tell you." Jesus wants to communicate with us. We need Him. He doesn't need a board game to communicate. Jesus can speak directly to your heart. All you need do to make contact with God is one word—"Jesus"
 . . . *At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"* (Philippians 2:10-11).

Speak the name "Jesus" in faith and the Spirit is with you. Definitely with you. It's not a game. Jesus promised. *"I am with you always till the end of the age."*

Pentecost is the birthday of the Spirit not it's funeral. We just heard Jesus say he had MORE to tell us and indeed the Holy Spirit has been speaking to us since Pentecost till the present time. We call the voice of the Holy Spirit through these 2,000 years "tradition". As Catholics we believe that Christ speaks to us through Scripture and through "tradition." This teaching is nothing more than a validation of the voice of the Holy Spirit through the ages and an attestation to the fact that God will continue to live within and speak through his church.

I think it is wonderful that people want messages from the Spirit world. Jesus told us that the Holy Spirit comes precisely because God has more to tell us. Empty your mind. Say the Name, "Jesus". God wants only what is best for you. God wants you to have an abundant, a good life. God wants to bless you. God made you and has a plan for your life. We are incomplete without God. He is waiting for you now. Go to him."

I would like to end with a passage from the bible. It is Jesus who is speaking. Listen.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you" (John 14:15-20).

"The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name---he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you" John 14: 25-26.