

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

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Pentecost and Parenting

Pentecost, this year, corresponds with Mother's Day; in this two-month cycle, Father's Day also occurs.

There are similarities and lessons worth learning.

Both Pentecost and parenting are life-long tasks, never finished, always unpredictable, demanding and gratifying all at once. On Pentecost, the Spirit makes a life-long commitment to be with the Church until the end of time. A parent commits to a child until the parent dies. The work of the Spirit with the Church is never finished. A parent's work is also endless. Even if, tragically, a child dies—a parent is the one who remembers, who recalls the birthdays and keeps in mind all the child was. At Pentecost, the Spirit leads the Church in ways the church does not always choose; it is an unpredictable journey; and often the Church breaks the Spirit's heart, so to speak. But the Spirit remains a faithful life-giver even when the Church does not want the life the Spirit offers. So, with parenting. A parent is never the parent one expected to be; and the child goes in directions the parent never envisioned. It is an unpredictable journey and the child sometimes breaks the parent's heart. The parent sometimes fails to be the life-giver parenting requires but the parent is expected to be a life-giver for as long as the parent lives.

On Pentecost, the Spirit becomes the Church's parent.

Whenever the Church gets it right, it gets it right because the life of the Spirit was in it, not to the extent that the Church had no life of its own but to the extent that it alone was never fully the creator of its own destiny.

The spirit of a parent is part of a child forever. When the parent has not failed, the parent gives a child life, long after the parent is gone. It is always the child's life but the child is never fully the owner of all its parts.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love and a source of life. I do not know a better description of a parent. When children remember a parent, they remember the love, if the parent was truly a parent. And they find in the parent someone who not only gave life once, at the beginning, but someone who will be a life-giver to a child's last breath. Is it any wonder that we remember our parents as we die and reach out for all that was good in them as we cross a boundary even more mysterious than the boundary from the womb to the arms of our mother and father.

As parents, we remember the day each child was born and the joy, which knew no boundaries, that came to us as we held in our arms the sons and daughters to whom we gave life.

The Spirit of God is a parent to us and to the Church in just this manner. When each of us is alive, when the Church is truly alive, the Spirit of God sees us as its own sons and daughters, as its own community of love, as all that God ever wanted to be for us.

Anthony