Pentecost Sunday  
May 15, 2016  
Deacon Tom Barford

We come together to celebrate this great feast of Pentecost, the sending of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes possible the Christian Life, that is, our relationship to God our Father and our following of Jesus.

In our 2nd reading from Corinthians we hear; “There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings by the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.”

And in our Gospel we hear Jesus say, “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you.”

When I prepare a homily I spend all week reading the scriptures for that weekend and pray that I may incorporate my life and spiritual training in helping at least one person on their road to salvation. Today’s celebration of Pentecost is of extreme importance to me and should be for every baptized person. And as I prepared I read a homily by St. Basil the Great, bishop and doctor of the Church. I was so moved that I decided that his words best states the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives and should be read and reread. I would ask you to listen carefully and if you wish to reread it I will put it on our parish wed site.

From, the paper on the Holy Spirit by St. Basil the Great, bishop  
(From the Liturgy of the Hours, 7th week of Easter, 2016)

The work of the Holy Spirit

“The titles given to the Holy Spirit must surely stir the soul of anyone who hears them, and make them realize that they speak of nothing less than the supreme Being. Is he not called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, the steadfast Spirit and the guiding Spirit? But his principal and most personal title is the Holy Spirit.

To the Holy Spirit all creatures turn in their need for sanctification; all living things seek him according to their ability. His breath empowers each to achieve its own natural end.

The Holy Spirit is the source of holiness, a spiritual light and he offers his own light to every mind to help it in its search for truth. By nature the Holy Spirit is beyond the reach of our mind, but we can know him by his goodness. The power of the Holy Spirit fills the whole universe, but gives himself only to those who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of their faith.
Simple in himself, the Holy Spirit is manifold in his mighty works. The whole of his being is present to each individual; the whole of his being is present everywhere. Though shared by many, he remains unchanged; his self-giving is no loss to himself. Like the sunshine, which permeates all the atmosphere, spreading over land and sea, and yet is enjoyed by each person as though it were for him alone, so the Holy Spirit pours forth his grace in full measure, sufficient for all, and yet is present as though exclusively to everyone who can receive him. To all creatures that share in him he gives a delight limited only by their own nature, not by his ability to give.

The Holy Spirit raises our hearts to heaven, guides the steps of the weak and brings to perfection those who are making progress. He enlightens those who have been cleansed from every stain of sin and makes them spiritual by communion with himself.

As clear transparent substances become very bright when sunlight falls on them and shine with a new radiance, so also souls in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, and who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, become spiritual themselves and a source of grace for others.

From the Holy Spirit come foreknowledge of the future, understanding of the mysteries of faith, insight into the hidden meaning of Scripture and other special gifts. Through the Holy Spirit we become citizens of heaven, we are admitted to the company of the angels, we enter into eternal happiness and abide in God. Through the Holy Spirit we acquire a likeness of God; indeed, we attain what is beyond our most sublime aspirations – we become God.”

As we turn now in anticipation of receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus, let us recall his pledge to send the Holy Spirit and the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives.