Pentecost – Fifty Days after the Resurrection of the Lord – The outpouring of the Holy Spirit. On the day of the Resurrection, Christ breathed on His Apostles and said, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them and whose sins you retain are retained.”

This occurred in a locked room, where the Apostles were filled with fear. I have shared with you before of how I witnessed a person so filled with fear of water they had to be carried out and placed on solid ground, their body so stiff they could not move on their own. We may have experienced for ourselves a time where we were frightened and could not move. On Pentecost there was no more fear. The power of the Spirit compelled them to open the door of the room and proclaim the living word of god without fear. It is a celebration of all the covenants from Noah to Sinai and the beginning of a new covenant brought about in each of us through our baptism. It is the beginning of the Church celebrated in memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The love of God in Jesus is poured into our lives and we become one with each other and the Lord. In such a union we are a people who do not need to fear, for the Lord is with us. But this truth is often not lived out.

Many times in our lives we close ourselves off from the love of God and from one another. We lock ourselves up within ourselves and we become frightened. It is often out of fear that we strike out with our words or with our actions. Why do young kids fight with one another or siblings quarrel? Often they are seeking power over the other, they are fearful that someone has greater power over them. They want to be number one. Why do parents yell at their kids when they want to offer correction? Don’t we think that the volume or the harshness of our words will force the child to conform to our values, and don’t children do the same to their parents? Why do nations build greater and more terrible weapons?

This week we witnessed the power and authority of a police officer over an individual, George Floyd, who subsequently died. In the rioting and looting do we not witness a rebellious act to try and get even? All of this is wrong. I can almost say without any doubt: neither the Child, Parent, Police Officer nor the Mobs said to themselves, “My actions are guided by the Holy Spirit.” They were all influenced by fear. If someone can take advantage of another person they can take advantage of me.

If we submit to the will of God freely, we can live without fear. God only wants to give us His grace, His Life. No one or nothing can stop the Spirit from blowing where it wills. She awakens the Church when she falls away from the truth. She empowers her prophets to speak boldly in calling her to reform. She speaks tenderly when offering mercy. She offers new life through the Sacraments. She speaks her words so all may understand. We are the Church, let us give ourselves to the Spirit of God’s love. Birthdays are a time of new beginnings. On this the Feast of Pentecost let us celebrate a joyous birthday.