

The Holy Spirit descended upon all the disciples on Pentecost, and Peter with Godly assurance stepped forward and addressed a crowd of thousands. Peter interpreted to the crowd what all the patriarchs had longed for, the prophets had prophesied about, the Psalms sang about and all the Jews had been anticipating; it had come about in Jesus Christ. Peter drew upon several Old Testament passages to show how Jesus in His life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension, fulfilled the predictions of the Old Covenant. He explained that Joel 2 had prophesied that when the Messiah came, marked by outpouring of the Holy Spirit, He would inaugurate the great end of the age (Acts 2, 17-18). This was to be the time of superabundant outpouring of God's spirit upon everybody, not just on the prophets and kings of the past.

In Numbers 11 God assisted Moses in leading the Israelites in the Exodus from Egypt by granting 70 of Moses' chosen wise elders (gathered in the tent of meeting) the wisdom to help him lead. But Eldad and Medad were two men still at the camp when the other 70 were "ordained" in the tent. Moses' assistant Joshua saw that they were prophesying like the others who received the Holy Spirit. When Joshua complained to Moses about them, Moses asked if it would not be wonderful for God to place the Holy Spirit upon all His people? Then On Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter joyfully proclaimed that God has done it, making the whole Church a community of prophets!

In his speech after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter used Psalm 16 to explain that it didn't make sense that David would talk about himself as not dying and not being buried; David was prophesying about Jesus, the Messiah's Resurrection to come! Dr. Healy commented that in the Psalms, Christ prays in us and we in Him. Imagine the Holy Spirit opening the spiritual eyes of the Jews to interpret in a totally different context what the Old Testament had predicted. Peter shared that God's promise centuries ago to pour out His Spirit was now being fulfilled after Jesus had gone to the Father in the Ascension. The Holy Spirit came down upon Peter and the disciples, which was what the crowd now saw and heard. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a direct result of the crucifixion and the Resurrection, and through Peter's

powerful witness, the crowd understood their contribution to His crucifixion by their past sins. The crowd was receptive to their need to repent and be baptized to also become recipients of the Holy Spirit; this was the power of the Kerygma!

To those who are open to it, the Kerygma is a message that is shouted into the depths of our souls; it demands contrition and results in eternal hope; it is a seed that bursts into new life. It is an original proclamation in us, such as in "Jesus Christ is Lord!" The Kerygma has an intrinsic, self-authenticating power that makes present an operative to convince the listeners if they are listening with their hearts... The Kerygma is *Christocentric*; the foundation is based upon the truth of Jesus Christ. "It is not about what the Church possesses and produces but the fact that Jesus Christ possesses the Church," said Cardinal Avery Dulles. The Kerygma is a message of salvation, a matter of eternal life through Jesus Christ or eternal death without Him. There is no other path to salvation. The Kerygma is counter cultural. Jesus Christ is truth established through God's own backing. We cannot be concerned about being politically correct, or worry about offending others in our commitment to Jesus Christ. We need to be able to tell others who Jesus is to us, what He has done for us, and how He has changed our lives.

There are two senses of evangelization, which means "to tell the good news." Strict evangelization directs us to proclaim the Kerygma by telling others about Jesus Christ to bring about their conversion. The other is in the broad sense of all that belongs to the Church: the whole mission including Catechesis or the apostles' teaching, breaking bread and the other sacraments, fellowship, and prayer, and all that is involved in the Church bringing Christ to the world. Peter's baptism of the 3,000 on Pentecost was the conversion that began the life of the Church. The ultimate goal of evangelization is to transform lives through the values of the gospels.

It is critical in our evangelization that we become true apostles, defined by Vatican II as those who look for ways to **VERBALLY PROCLAIM THE NEWS OF SALVATION IN JESUS**. The powerful foundation for the rest of Christian faith development which needs to be the center of our proclamations, is the Kerygma!

In addition to the Kerygma and evangelization, the Holy Spirit shares His penetrating power with us in another way. Just as Jesus performed mighty deeds and miracles through the Holy Spirit, the apostles in performed many signs and wonders (Acts 2:43), signifying that Jesus is alive and His kingdom is here, as He won victory over sin and death. Acts 3 describes the signs and wonders in detail. Once as Peter and John went to the temple at 3:00 pm for prayer (the time of Jesus's death from the crucifixion), a lame man at the temple entrance asked Peter and John for alms. As they had followed Jesus' directives in taking nothing with them in their ministry, they had nothing of human value to give the man. Peter said he had no money, but he would give the man what he had. "In the name of Jesus Christ, walk!" (Acts 3:6-8) Peter then took him by the hand and "raised him up" (the Resurrection is the source of all healing, and is the prophecy of OUR final resurrection.) First was Peter's act of faith when he pulled the man up; then the man's ankles and legs were made strong and he walked, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (35:5-6). The surrounding people were amazed, and it was then that Peter then proclaimed the Kerygma. In wonder and amazement, the number of believers grew to about 5,000. There are two components in all healing: the presence and authority of Jesus and the healer's accompanying faith in His name.

Along with the acceleration of growth of the Church was the corresponding opposition that Jesus had faced. In Acts 4, the Sanhedrin recognized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. The deeper significance of this involves the crucial aspect of discipleship with Jesus. His disciples must spend time developing a close relationship with Him, prior to their ministry (Mark 3:14). In addition, *on-going* prayer, participation in the sacraments, and Biblical study provide the foundation for fruitful ministry. The Greek term *parrhesia* applies to those who steadfastly seek the Lord; they can boldly approach the throne of grace to obtain mercy, favor and help in time of need. The apostles' response to the Sanhedrin opposition was to pray harder for more signs and wonders to be worked in Jesus' name; they prayed so hard the room shook with the forceful support of the Holy Spirit. It was like another Pentecost! (Acts 4:31)

The apostles continued to preach using words and miraculous actions to convince the people (Mt 10:7-8). In Mark 16:17-18, Jesus promises all those who profess their faith to others will be able to use Jesus' name to perform miraculous signs and wonders. How can *we* do this? Dr. Healy explained when sharing Jesus with others, we can offer to pray and lay our hands on them to bring about their healing. The more humble and simple we are, the more God gets the glory. She illustrated the point by explaining that St. Francis Xavier had evangelized and baptized so many in India, he was unable to respond to the overwhelming number of requests for his healing ministry. Thus St. Francis effectively utilized converted children in his outreach ministry.

Liberty for the oppressed is another aspect of healing in evangelism. After Jesus received the Holy Spirit at His Baptism, He resisted the evil of the devil in the desert. Jesus then proceeded to heal people under demonic oppression in His ministry. Jesus' entire ministry involved dismantling the devil's kingdom of darkness. In Acts 16, Paul provoked demonic opposition as he evangelized in Philippi. A slave girl with a clairvoyant spirit was used to earn substantial income for her masters through her fortune telling. She followed Paul for several days, proclaiming, "These men are servants of God; they make known the way of salvation." Her orthodoxy was correct, but she could hinder the Church by her wrong spirit and interfere with Paul by distracting the people from hearing his message. After prayer that led to spiritual discernment over several days, Paul finally, in the name of Jesus, ordered the demon out of her. The slave girl's owners were enraged by Paul as they lost their source of income; thus they provoked a riot and Paul was beaten with a rod and thrown in jail. Jesus' followers suffer in the process, but under the Holy Spirit, the greater good prevails as the devil is overcome.

At Jesus' Baptism, the Father proclaimed His pride in His Son. In the desert, the devil tried to instill doubt of Jesus' identity, when he taunted, "If you are the Son of God..." Just as he attempted to derail Jesus, the devil tries to instill doubt in our identity as children of God to derail us; but with the power of the Holy Spirit we can resist Satan and help others to also.