

There are 2 Pentecost humilies .
I like the second one better ①

Pentecost



We know now from today's first reading that when the Spirit descended upon the apostles in the upper room it was a rather flashy event – big wind, tongues of fire. Sometimes when the Spirit moves within the church it is like that too. I think the Vatican Council was like that – thousands of bishops, major changes in the church, etc... But, aside from the flashy appearances, the Spirit's appearance is mostly quiet – interior. In Proust's novel, *In Search of Lost Time* there is a boy named Marcel who lived a very sheltered life in a village town in France. One summer his grandmother invited him to go with her to Paris. Marcel had never been off the farm before so he was apprehensive about going to the big city. They were going to stay at a seaside resort. Every railway stop along the trip raised his anxieties until arriving at the seaside he became very, very homesick. The Grand Hotel where they were to stay bothered him even more. He was intimidated by the monumental staircase and the indifferent staff. All he wanted to do was to get into the seclusion of his hotel room. Once there he found it impossible to sleep. Everything in the room was so big – like nothing he had experienced before. He felt menaced and wished he could die.

Marcel's mind was much like our minds when we have to face things we are unfamiliar with. Then his grandmother came in and Marcel ran into her arms. She responded to Marcel that she would be in the next room and if he needed anything during the night to rap on the wall. She said "My bed is just on the other side of that wall and the partition is quite thin." In one sentence Marcel's grandmother transformed Marcel's fear into security. The Holy Spirit is the same for us – just on the other side of a thin wall, the place where our faith dwells. It was his grandmother who showed Marcel the beautiful sea at dawn the next morning, who sat with him in the hotel dining room, the first breakfast Marcel had ever had outside the little kitchen in his small farm house. Inspired by his grandmother's interventions Marcel came to experience life as

he has never known it before. And that is what the Spirit does for us, too. More often than not the Spirit will attempt to infiltrate our hearts and minds in ways more subtle but no less potent than Pentecost itself. The Spirit may come to us in a grandmother's compassion, a friend's touch, a beautiful sunrise or a rose.

On this feast of the Holy Spirit may we be open to all that God offers us, both in a spectacular way and especially in all those small ways.