

Father Don Fisher's Pentecost Sunday Homily  
May 18, 1986, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Ordination

O God, you have given each of us a yearning for the truth. It undergirds all our desires to be honest with each other, to be in on what is happening, to know how it is. As the forsythia and the dogwood of spring are another name for beauty, so the truth, O God, is another name for you.

You urge us to be with each other, so we become friends, we marry, we make love, we organize . . . and we know loneliness when this forging of community eludes us. Even when death takes our loved ones we hold fast to the fragile thread that joins us; we prayerfully remember them and hope to see them again.

Dear God, I think of these gifts of Your truth and Your call to love as I reflect on the priesthood this afternoon with my family and friends on this beautiful feast of Pentecost. They are powerful gifts; they send us forth to . . . search . . . to be with.

Spirit God, work these gifts of truth and love into the fabric of our lives. Help us to trust our instincts . . . that it is the simple things that matter, that they can't be purchased with money, that they cannot last if not shared with others, that we are not to be takers, but givers and sharers.

I was taught well, O God, through all my seminary training, to see you in Jesus of Nazareth, of Galilee; I'm learning in the years since to see You as a Salvadoran, a Nicaraguan, a South African, a Tanzanian . . . all neighbors on this small planet. Help us to see you in the many, many people who do not even call out Your name, but whose goodness and suffering are sure signs of Your presence,

Through all the piles of books and notes, and the years of lectures, prayer and meditation I sought You, O God, and gained some valuable insights, but it was some later experiences that made me wonder what it was that I really knew. For a while I was glad about being, as they say, "elevated to the priesthood", I "kind of" enjoyed this pedestal arrangement. Now it makes me nervous, and more ashamed than glad to be "pedestalized" while so many others are put down, and kept down. For now it is no longer time for special uniforms to mark us off from the world, or special status to make sure we're taken care of. Rather, it's time for especially strong commitments to our broken world, and time to serve, not be served.

People are very conscious nowadays, O God, of security, and danger, and carefully guarding what we have . . . and who we are. I think of the apostles and the friends and family member of Jesus huddled in the upper room, safe, secure . . . behind locked doors. Their fear made them forget the Good News they should have been enjoying and spreading. Until they received the Spirit, Your Spirit. Break through our fears, too, and breathe anew into us this same spirit. Open our hearts, and hands. Open the future.

When first ordained I was grateful, O God, for Your power in me to forgive sins, to invoke Your blessings, to celebrate at Your Eucharistic table. I'm somewhat clearer now that forgiveness is really the power to forgive myself, and to help others see that they can forgive themselves, and forgive others. I'm beginning to see that I celebrate the Eucharist with the whole community of believers, and I want to help make that community more and more representative of all Your people, O God. And the power to bless? Not a power but a privilege, a gift to see that life itself is a blessing . . . and that we bless each other along the way by not standing apart from each other, but by standing with . . . and standing for.

Let us feel Your live within us, O Spirit of God . . . You have always been with Your people. Manifest Yourself with great power in our time, like a mighty wind blowing. We need you. May our search for the truth, and our experience of Your love lead us to direct our lives toward the things that really matter, to rejoice today and everyday in Your mysterious companionship with us. Amen. Alleluia.