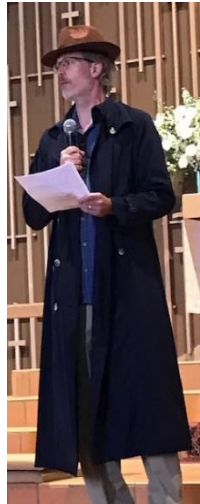


In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Intro - skit



I. Scripture parallels

A. They were sitting there, all together in that upper room – sad and fearful.

1. Their beloved leader had left them – ascending into heaven to be with the Father.

2. Now, what would they do?

- What **could** they do?

- They were paralyzed with fear and unknowing.

3. Then, suddenly the disciples were overwhelmed by a rushing blast of wind, as what felt like tongues of fire settled on them.

4. They were filled with the power of God and rushed into the streets praising God in languages that they themselves didn't know.

5. And then, they didn't have to worry about what to do anymore.



6. The Holy Spirit gave them what they needed and empowered them to get the job done.

B. The parallels here are striking, as you, the good people of St. Columba's, might find yourselves in a similar state of mind.

1. Our leader is leaving – and it is easy to fall into that same sense of feeling paralyzed.

2. Now, what will WE do?
- What can we do?

3. But that same Holy Spirit, who guided them, will give YOU what YOU need and will help to guide you through these next few months of transition, so you can come out stronger on the other side.



C. Our Gospel reading gives us another parallel, as Jesus is preparing his disciples for what they are to do and how they are to live after his crucifixion.

1. Once again he reminds them that He and the Father are one; and that those who believe in Him will do even greater works because Jesus is now going to the Father.

2. As one scholar noted, “Thus the absence of Jesus does not mean that the works done by the Father through Jesus will cease.

- “Now these works will be accomplished *in the name of Jesus* by those who believe in him.”

3. And then Jesus promises to send them the Holy Spirit to be their Advocate and Guide.

4. Listen to what Jesus says in the Gospel, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.”

5. And this Advocate, Jesus says, “will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

6. That’s the Holy Spirit – that’s **God within us** – teaching us, leading us, and guiding where God would have us go, to do what God would have us do.

II. Last remarks

A. So what do I need to tell you as my last sermon here?

1. What do I need to say, and you need to hear, to move into the brave new world we are all being called to?

2. I think it’s simply this – we are called to LOVE.

3. Jesus says, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”*

4. What is Jesus’ Commandment?

- Love one another as I have loved you.

5. When we do this – when we keep Jesus’ Commandments – when we love one another – we are living out our faith and thus are able to be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

6. We may never experience the Holy Spirit in that mighty RUSH of the first Pentecost – but each of us has received this ADVOCATE – this **God within us** – to guide us and help us in keeping Jesus’ Commandment to love one another.

7. So we must have faith and trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in us, if we are willing to be open and willing to follow the way we are being led.

B. That’s really all you have to do – if you think about it, that’s all we’ve been doing the past 20 years – loving one another.

1. It is out of that love for one another that we have continued to provide food for people through thick and thin – and now with two programs, we are able to do so each week.

2. It is out of love for one another that we pray that Welcoming Prayer week after week, and then live into it as we truly do welcome those who God has sent into our midst.

3. It is out of love for one another that we come together to celebrate our life together with the BBQ, or the Winefest, or the Celtic Christmas Faire and all the other ways we celebrate with each other in our accomplishments and console one another in our shortcomings.

4. It is out of love for one another, respect for those who came before us, and hope for those who come after us that we strive to keep our campus in good repair; and make our buildings available to those who need a place to meet to carry out their ministry.

5. It is out of love for one another that we have one of, if not the best Preschool in Camarillo, offering children we may never know the most important start to their education, the results of which we will never see.

6. And it is out of love for one another that we come together week by week to work, pray, and give for the spread of God's Kingdom.

C. So my parting words – my last shot – is simply this: Love one another.

1. If you truly love one another it will get you through the sticky spots of the transition.

- That doesn't mean they won't happen – but when they do, if you can remember to love one another, it makes them much easier to overcome.

2. And when your new priest comes – and they will come – love them.

3. It will take a little while for everyone to settle in, but as you do, do it in a spirit of love – and it will be so much easier for everyone.

4. And for heaven's sake, please don't say: "Well Fr. Greg did it this way; or we always do it that way."

- Give them your faith and love, and trust that they are doing what they are doing out of love for you.

Conclusion

Because, in the end, it really does come down to this:

*If **YOU** believe and **I** believe and we **together** pray
The Holy Spirit must come down and set God's people free
And set God's people free – and set God's people free
The Holy Spirit **MUST** come down and set God's people free.*

"Love one another, as I have love you..." AMEN

