

JUNE 8 2025, FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

Wake Up, It's Pentecost!

One Sunday morning, Michael's mother hurries into her son's bedroom and wakes him up.

"Michael! It's Sunday. Time to get up. Time to get up and go to church. Get up!"

Michael mumbles under the covers, "I don't want to go."

"What do you mean, you don't want to go?" says his mother. "That's silly. Now get up, get dressed, and go to church."

Michael replies, "No, I don't want to go. And I'll give you two reasons why I don't want to go."

He sits up on the bed and continues, "First, I don't like them. And second, they don't like me."

His mother responds, "Now that's plain nonsense. You have got to go to church, and I'll give you two reasons why you must. First, you're now 42 years old. And second, you're the pastor."

Sisters and brothers, the sleepy Michael could just as well be any one of the Apostles, hiding in the upper room after Jesus had commissioned them to go out and proclaim the Good News. As soon as Jesus ascended, they locked themselves away out of fear. They knew the people didn't like them—or the message they were sent to proclaim.

It was at that moment of fear that the Holy Spirit filled the room where they were gathered—and more importantly, filled their hearts. The

result? The Apostles were set on fire. They finally understood what it meant to be the witnesses of Jesus.

Pentecost was a big deal for the Apostles. And Pentecost is still a big deal for us today—just as it was more than 2,000 years ago.

We live in a society that is becoming more and more secular. A society in which each one of us, through our baptism, is called and commissioned to bear witness to the love and life of Christ.

Today, the basic human values that the Church—and society—upheld for generations are being questioned. And often, this is done in the name of personal freedom and individual choice.

We see this in debates around the dignity of human life, abortion, and doctor-assisted suicide, for example.

Living in this kind of culture, each time we come to celebrate the Eucharist, the Holy Spirit nourishes and awakens our conscience. The Spirit gives us the courage and sensitivity we need to bear witness—both as individuals and as a community of faith.

So today, as we celebrate this great feast of Pentecost, we pray for the entire Church to open our hearts and our minds. We ask the Holy Spirit to pour out His gifts—gifts that will strengthen us to be true witnesses of Christ in our families, in our communities, and in our world.

Amen.