

Stewardship Bulletin Message Number 13 (May 2010)

LIKE A STRONG DRIVING WIND

A Pentecostal Reflection on Stewardship

During the fifty days since our celebration of Easter, the readings for daily Masses have been from the Acts of the Apostles, Luke's broad survey of the church's development from the resurrection of Jesus to Paul's first Roman imprisonment. The readings have described the history of the apostolic church as the story of a Spirit-guided community of Jewish Christians commissioned to spread the divine message of salvation not only to the Jews of Jerusalem but also to the Gentiles of the Roman Empire.

The chief characteristics of the Jerusalem community were: adherence to the teachings of the Twelve and the centering of its religious life in the Eucharistic liturgy; a system of distribution of goods that led wealthier Christians to sell their possessions when the needs of the community's poor required it; and continued attendance at the temple, since in this initial stage there was little or no thought of any dividing line between Christianity and Judaism.

From its beginnings as a Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, the church has placed great emphasis on stewardship, the sharing of members' possessions as a return with gratitude of their gifts from God; and evangelization, members executing the mission to share the Word of God with all peoples.

During the two millennia since Pentecost, the focus has not changed. The Catholic Church, through its apostolic heritage, continues to encourage its members to practice stewardship and evangelization.

As current day disciples of Jesus, our concrete acts of stewardship and evangelization are in marked contrast to that of the world at large. We share our time, perhaps as a committed volunteer at the Cor Unum Meal Center; while others complain that they have no time. We share our talent, perhaps as a singer in the parish choir; yet others do not even recognize their talents, let alone share them. We share our treasure, perhaps inspired to a level of sacrificial giving in the weekly offertory at Mass; while others are driven to hoard their wealth or spend it on ultimately unsatisfying personal gratification. We aspire to bring Christ's saving message to others, perhaps by inviting a co-worker to join us at Mass; yet others encapsulate themselves in isolation.

At Pentecost, as they began their great commission, the apostles received the empowering and enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by a noise like a strong driving wind.

Hold up your hand. Do you feel the wind yet?

Ed Sampson
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