

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

May 28, 2023 • Pentecost Sunday • John 20:10–23

Proud to Be Catholic

Once more we hear the story of the Risen Christ's appearing to the disciples and breathing the Spirit into them. We can read the story of the Pentecost in Acts 12:1–12. It is the first reading for Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is considered the birthday of the church.

There is a great concern in our church today about Catholic literacy. What does it mean to be Catholic? I grew up on the south side of Chicago. Next door lived the Hallers; they were Lutherans. Across the street lived the Rosenthals; they were Jewish. Basically, everyone on our block was “something.” All families went to church or synagogue on the weekend, and if they didn't, they surely didn't tell anyone. I knew I was Catholic, just like I knew I was Polish-American. It was a part of my identity.

Unfortunately for children today, Catholic identity is not always a given. As parents, we have to be more deliberate in helping them claim that identity. We have to talk to our children about our Catholic faith, particularly those beliefs that distinguish us from other religious denominations. And we have to help them experience the rites and rituals, the sounds and smells and the gracious giving that mark us as Catholic.

What do we believe? We believe in Jesus Christ, God with us. We believe we are the body of Christ in the world today, called to reconcile and heal all people and the earth itself. We believe in God's goodness in all of creation.

We believe in the sacraments, seven concrete signs that God is with us, inviting us to live in his

grace. We believe in Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. We believe in the community of saints, living and dead. And we believe in promoting justice and peace for all our brothers and sisters.

We are a church of rituals. Bring those rituals home to your family. Burn incense; light candles. Fast and abstain from meat during Lent. Make the Sign of the Cross often together. Serve those in need. And constantly tell your children this is what it means to be Catholic. Use the word Catholic often. Help your youngsters feel proud of their faith, proud to be called Catholic.

FAMILY RESPONSE

During your next meal together have people at the table talk about what they think it means to be a Catholic.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

What do you like most about the Catholic faith? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?