



## May 23, 2010 Easter Time: Pentecost

*"For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit." 1 Corinthians 12:13*

Dear Friends:

Why don't we restore the monarchy? The pageantry would be good for tourism, the economy would benefit, it would restore a little royal dignity to the political processes, people would know their proper place in society and everything will be beautiful and harmonious.

Now how many of us no matter what our political perspective would think that restoring the monarchy is a good idea? A silly question, maybe, but something similar is happening to the Catholic Church. And they are using similar arguments under the pretext of dignity and reverence. It is not monarchy but something similar—clericalism—that they are trying to restore.

Clericalism is the culture that concentrates all power in the clergy (clerics). This means that they control and run everything. Those who are not clerics are to remain pliant, silent, subservient and obedient to the wishes of the clergy. It is patterned after the systems of empire and monarchy. It is the clerical culture that has led us to the scandals of the recent decades. It may have worked when the bulk of the population were ignorant, illiterate, medieval peasants. It certainly does not work now and does not reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) was inaugurated by Blessed Pope John XXIII to be a "New Pentecost." The Church was not defined as the ruling class, that is the clergy, but rather first as the "People of God." There is room for hierarchy (meaning 'holy rule')—the ordained. But that rule is based on the model of Jesus who said that leadership is not to be based on top down; the powerful lording it over the weak (see Luke 22:25) Leaders are to be servants not CEOs or renaissance princes.

Vatican II tried to restore the model of servant leader. The liturgy was reformed so that the collective body of believers—lay and ordained—could act as one body with Christ the Head the one who is acting in all. It is Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit that confects the Eucharistic sacrificial meal. This is why full conscious and active participation of all the faithful was emphasized as the essential responsibility of all the baptized.

Make no mistake that bishops and priests who are enamored of the Tridentine Rite are the religious equivalent of monarchists. Reporter Jerry Filteau recently reported in the National Catholic Reporter that he attended the Pontifical High Tridentine Latin Mass celebrated at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. After watching the elaborate pageantry of a bishop and his twenty yard long scarlet silk cape and other elaborate, archaic rituals he stated:

By that point I had come to realize that this Tridentine liturgy was an elaborate ritual manifestation of ecclesiastical rank, not a Mass in conformity with the fundamental Vatican II mandate for full, active, conscious participation by the faithful.

My friends we need to be grateful that Vatican II returned the liturgy to the "People of God" lay and ordained. That it is a celebration of the gift of God's Spirit working through all God's people together rather than the elite and powerful few dominating a passive minority. The dignity of our baptism has been returned to us and the role of the Holy Spirit has become more manifest. May this same Spirit continue to renew and reform our Church.

Come Holy Spirit,

*Fr Ron*