

SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE SEMINARY
MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS 60060

HOMILY - MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT - SEPTEMBER 26, 1975

In America today, we as a nation are beginning a celebration of our Bicentennial. We are asked to rekindle a spirit of liberty and justice for all, so that the spirit that originally brought a group of people together to form a new nation might be rekindled in each of our own lives.

In many large corporations today a great deal of planning, work and effort goes into the desire to create a spirit among employees and consumers, a spirit of trust, of confidence, of pride in the particular venture in which a corporation is involved.

Fraternal organizations of every shape and form try to inculcate a spirit that is peculiar to each organization among its members. Families in turn attempt in so many ways to create a spirit that is unique to a particular group of people who are related to each other.

This spirit of a community whether it is a nation, a corporation, a fraternal organization or family is an intangible reality which presumes the presence of a group of people who must strive and work to create this certain spirit. The spirit that is created can easily be diminished or even lost. And that can become a tragedy.

Yet there is one community of people in society today who need not be concerned about the presence of the spirit that has to be created, for in this particular community a spirit is already present. That community is the Christian Community and the spirit that is present is the Holy Spirit.

Unlike other societies in human experience, there is no need to work and strive for the creation of this Spirit because in the Christian Community the Spirit is present. The task of the Christian Community, and the individual concrete reality of smaller communities within the total Church, is to be able to recognize the Spirit and respond to the challenge that he offers.

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That is why it is the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church that when members of a Christian Community who have a special purpose within the Church begin a new experience in growth and development, we are called upon to celebrate a liturgy of the Holy Spirit, a liturgy which asks us to respond to the challenge of recognizing the spirit in our midst and to be open to the gentle breath that the spirit offers. The response to the spirit is not a robot response but rather a response that tries to evoke from each of us the individuality that we each bring to a shared faith and tradition. It is somewhat similiar to what is even happening on the grounds at the moment where each tree responds in its own unique way to the warm breath of the gentle breeze in the changing temperature of a fall season. Each tree accentuates its own individual response in varied hues of brown and red and orange and yellow. But while responding in an individual way, together each tree offers a panorama of total response which to the eye is a beauty that is breathtaking.

In the Word of God that we have heard, we know the presence of the spirit in the community of the Church is a gift. This gift is one that is given to the total Church and also to the various communities which comprise the Church such as this Seminary. We begin a new year hopefully consci ous of the call of the Spirit to each of us with a strong awareness that this spirit who is in our midst is a gift to each of us and to all of us. The response that we make allows for differences of opinion and dialogue and discussion. The response that we give must not be one of rigidity where we baptize new approaches to certain situations in order to respond to previously structured experiences and the new response becomes far more rigid than the old.

If the spirit is to be present in the Church today in a more forceful and recognizable fashion, he must be present in an institution such as ours, in an experience which we share together. For it is here that the Spirit must touch the lives of each of us and bring out

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the individual total response that is asked of us to be men of faith, men of prayer, men of the Church who will be the leaders for pointing to the presence of the Spirit in the Church in years to come.

For all this then we pray in this liturgy as a result of hearing the Word of God. Other communities within human society would give anything to have the gift that is given in a special way to the Christian Community the gift of the Spirit. The work we have to do this year is to recognize His presence.