

COMMUNICATION: It comes in various forms. The communication with one of the ladies I visit regularly depends on whether her hearing aid is working. If it is, we have a fine time; if it isn't, we mostly fuss with it, hold hands and smile, then share Holy Communion, with her joining in lustily with the Lord's Prayer.

Another lady has good hearing and loves to talk, which is fortunate because she is blind. Hers is a challenging life, as she is also partially paralyzed and most often confined to her bed. We have a good chat nevertheless.

I tell you this because I think Pentecost, this day when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit, has much to do with communication.

Never before in the history of the world has communication been so highly valued or so talked about:
----communication skills are taught in our schools.

---in our religious life, never before have our leaders so supported ecumenical dialogue.

---internationally, we have satellites that can instantly relay info. across the globe.

---red phones on the desks of world leaders can put them in immediate dialogue with one another ---so loath are we to miss speaking to each other, that many homes, offices

and cars have answering machines attached to phones, land and cell, to catch every possible exchange.

----computers talk to other computers, giving the user instant access

to endless amounts of data.

-----we tweet; we text; we do Face Book (at least some of us do).

Ours is a world which communicates!! Or DO we?

Families find it difficult to express matters of importance to each other. Teenagers often can't talk to parents or parents to teenagers; sometimes parents hesitate to talk to other parents about communication difficulties or other issues. (Although judging from the callouses on teen age thumbs, THEY seem to be able to communicate with each other very nicely.)

In spite of some attempts at dialogue, religious groups are finding deep areas of disagreement, whether it be regarding birth control, abortion, sexual preference, the inerrancy of scripture, women's ordination, women's rights in general, political activism by clergy, the presence of strident religious groups in the Holy Land or the role nuclear weapons should play in the life of nations.

-----Israelis fight Palestinians,

---Fundamentalists battle the so-called Liberal Churches.

-----Episcopalians argue with Episcopalians.(Nothing new there!)

-----We religious people share the same God and yet find it very difficult to arrive at any understanding with each other.

-----World leaders certainly find it hard to communicate effectively with each other even when their motives are fairly sincere.

We have all the technology and skill necessary for good communication:

- trained therapists and family counselors
- theologians and religious educators
- scientists

We have the ability to communicate, but we DON'T and its a real problem.

Let's see what the Pentecost story can teach us about Communication.

There are at least two important aspects to this. One is receiving the Holy Spirit (God's communications with us in sending the Holy Spirit.) The other is doing something about the fact that we know its presence in our lives; receiving and doing....God initiates the first action. God gives the disciples the Holy Spirit, enabling them to speak about "God's deeds of power." (The mighty works of God,

in other translations I prefer.) From that time on, those simple people from the Galilee could make themselves understood by all. They were the Church. Because of them there IS the Church. (With the help of St. Paul, of course.)

We are the Lord's disciples now, for our day. We too have received the Holy Spirit. It is God's gift to us and will soon be received by a number of people through Baptism here this morning. They will be invited to articulate in their lives Jesus' message of love, acceptance and reconciliation. It isn't easy, but Jesus tells us in today's Gospel of John: "The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these." He challenges us to be communicators of the Gospel.

It's easier to address people similar to ourselves; a lot harder when it's a teenager, an older person, a Fundamentalist, a Russian, perhaps, an Iranian, a Jew, a Moslem, a person of a different skin color. It's a lot harder to be loving when we disapprove of the person we encounter, when we are offended or frightened, perhaps.

Being a reconciling force in the world, a force which does not deal in absolutes, but accepts diversity and different points of view, this way of being is absolutely crucial for the survival of the world and is, at the same time (not surprisingly) completely faithful to Jesus' life and thought and direction. Examples abound in the Gospels: The

woman who was a notorious sinner; the paralytic (Mk. 2:3ff) ; the blind man at the Pool of Siloam; the possessed..... All are forgiven, accepted and sent out.

We obviously aren't Jesus and we bring our own defective selves to the task and yet it IS our task. And that's why today is so important. By ourselves it would be impossible, but when we acknowledge and affirm the presence of God's Spirit in our lives, then we are able to be God's communicators, limited though we may be.....

The world depends upon it, depends on a people who know themselves FILLED by God and who are capable, at least part of the time, of expressing that truth to others. Satellites and red phones won't save the world. Family counselors can do nothing if those involved are unwilling to walk in the other person's shoes for a while. Answering machines and computers are only as effective as those who use them.

You and I CAN make a difference. The world needs us. With the help of the Holy Spirit , 'YES WE CAN!!' AMEN