

**Homily — Pentecost 2018
by Rev. Bob Schramm, OSFS**

In April of 1963, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was in jail in Birmingham Ala., for demonstrating against racial segregation there. He wrote a letter while in jail that has been an inspiration for many people ever since.

**One paragraph of that letter came to my mind
as I reflected on the readings for this feast of Pentecost.
Dr. King says:**

**“I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states.
I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta
and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham.
Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.
We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of destiny.
Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”**

**I’m sure Dr. King had St. Paul’s words in today’s second reading
at least in the back of his mind as he penned those words.**

**“To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit
is given for the common good . . .
As the body is one though it has many parts,
and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body,
so also Christ.”**

**There is no escaping the fact that we are intimately tied to one another.
What effects you, effects me and visa versa.**

**Now, we Americans, of course, have a tough time
with what St. Paul calls “the common good.”
Our nation is founded on a document called
the Declaration of Independence.
And we’ve been proud of our rugged individualism ever since.**

**There is something very good
about that “pull-yourself-up-by-your-own-bootstraps” mentality.
It clearly helped people settle this vast land we call**

the UNITED States of America.

**But like most things in life,
there is a downside to our sense of independence.**

**I sense the downside is being played out a lot in this country right now.
There is this sense that *my* interests and my country's interests
just have to come first.**

**BUT, we are called, invited, urged, to be participants in something much bigger.
something unimaginably more vast.**

**At Pentecost, we fervently cry out.
We cry out, "Send forth your spirit and renew the face of the earth."
And God cries out to us, "Will you join in that endeavor?"**

**What sound Catholic theology of the Holy Spirit says
is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are spread around.
Nobody gets all the gifts.
That means that we dearly need one another in order to be complete.
Dr. King had it right.
We are caught up in this inescapable network of mutuality.
We are tied in a single garment of destiny.
Either we will rise together or we will fall together.**

**Poor People's Campaign — Connecting systematic racism,
economic justice with voting rights and just immigration.**

**We are about to go to the table again together.
We take bread and wine and pray over them together –
bread formed from a multitude of wheat grains;
wine pressed from a host of grapes crushed so we might
share from a common cup.**

**All of this is a solemn reminder of the deepest meaning
of this Pentecost feast.**

**We are called here by the Spirit, from many places,
with our many gifts as well as our many needs and shortcomings.
We, many though we are, are being shaped and formed by the Spirit
into the very Body and Blood of Christ.**