

It happened in Galveston, TX. A woman was cleaning the bottom of the cage of her parakeet, Chippie with the canister vacuum cleaner. She was not using an attachment on the tube. When the telephone rang, she turned her head to pick it up, continuing to vacuum the cage as she said "Hello" into the phone.

Then she heard the horrible noise of Chippie being sucked into the vacuum. Immediately, she put down the phone, ripped open the vacuum bag, and found Chippie in there, stunned, but still alive. Since the bird was covered with dust and dirt, she grabbed it, ran it into the bathroom, turned on the faucet, and held the bird under the water to clean it off.

When she finished that, she saw the hair dryer on the bathroom sink. She turned it on and held the bird in front of the blast of hot air to dry him off. A few weeks later, a reporter from the newspaper that originally published the story went out to the house to ask the woman, "How's Chippie doing now?" She said, He just sort of sits and stares."

Today's gospel tells us that it was what happened to the apostles. They all were traumatized by the arrest and crucifixion of their master and bewildered by his post-resurrection appearances and his command to prepare for the coming of his Holy Spirit. We can imagine, they were just sitting and staring in that room. Then came Pentecost and nothing could keep them from singing about Jesus Christ. They woke up!

\*It is important to point out that Pentecost was not about the birth of the Holy Spirit, for the Holy Spirit existed eternally with the Father and the Son.

\*Now, technically speaking, the seed of the Church came into existence when the blood and water flowed from the side of Christ fertilizing the ground and giving rise to the Church in the resurrection.

One thing for certain, following Pentecost these men were not the same people.

+Charles Colson was convicted for his involvement in the Watergate scandal. In time, however the Holy Spirit worked through this dark time of his life and awakened him. He came to fully believe in the resurrection of Jesus and what took place after Pentecost. When asked, "How do you know what took place was not a hoax?" His answer: Watergate.

Watergate involved a conspiracy perpetuated by the closest aides to the president of the United States and who were intensely loyal to their president.

But one of them, John Dean, turned state's evidence, that is, testified against Nixon, as he put it, "to save his own skin"—and he did so only two weeks after informing the president about what was really going on—two weeks!

The cover-up, the lie, could only be held together for two weeks, and then everybody else jumped ship in order to save themselves. Now, the fact is that all those around the president were facing embarrassment, maybe prison, but nobody's life was at stake.

But what about the disciples? Basically, powerless men, mostly peasants, were facing not just embarrassment or political disgrace but beatings, stoning, execution. Every single one of the disciples insisted, to their dying breaths, that they had physically seen Jesus bodily raised from the dead.

He wrote, “Don't you think that one of those apostles would have cracked before being beheaded or stoned? That one of them would have made a deal with the authorities. None did. Men will give their lives for something they believe to be true; they will never give their lives for something they know to be false.”

But the apostles could not deny Jesus, because they had seen him face to face, and they knew he had risen from the dead. Yes, it really happened.

Two thousand years later, nothing less than the power of the risen Christ could inspire Christians around the world to remain faithful-despite prison, torture, and death. Jesus is Lord is Lord of all Life. That is the thrilling message of the resurrection and Pentecost and one you can bet your life upon.

\*Pentecost is a feast about the Church going public and exploding into life, as the disciples bolted from the room and went out into the world. Many great miracles took place after Pentecost, with the Church growing quickly. Some ask, “Why were there so many miracles in the Early Church?”

One saint (I forget who) replied that it is like when you plant and a new plant you pour lots of water and good soil to get it going. God was pouring the Holy Spirit on the Early Church to make sure it took off, to get it going.

\*While the Church may have been energized back when it started, Pentecost is not a onetime event, but an event that is eternal, reaching out with the rays of the Holy Spirit to every generation, to all people everywhere raising up the Church. Still touching us to witness.

I spent five years in Radford VA, in a parish of 3 to 4 hundred parishioners. Never in a 1000 years did I ever think I would have ended up here. But the Holy Spirit against all odds brought me here! The same spirit of that first Pentecost.

We might say that the Holy Spirit brought me to Cathedral, not only to save you from hedonism, but to nourish this Shepard.

+There is something in hindsight that I discovered in my trip to the Holy Land. Hindsight gleamed last weekend as a matter of fact. I had a very spiritually awakening during that pilgrimage, but it continues to touch me afterward.

You go to these various holy sites and there is that inner hope that you will get zapped, like a voice saying, “I'm here Patrick! You've found me!” or some sort of obvious sign that I was in the presence of God. However, that did not happen. But through the Holy Spirit I did discover the presence of God in all these places, looking back.

God was in the Pilgrims that surrounded me on trip at all the various sights we visited. Looking back what I experienced is the love for me that surrounded me.

There was Christ, at each site touching me. Love your priest like Christ and he will be Christ to you and you Christ to him.