

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

Dear Confirmands:

Destani, Tiara, Terry, Evan, and Alex [and you too, Andrew, and Nick]—

“Do not get drunk with wine...

but be filled with the Holy Spirit” (Eph 5:18).

That’s what St. Paul has to say to the Ephesians.

I bet you didn’t see that one coming!

After all this instruction in the faith,

all those classes on the Scriptures and the Catechism,

and memory verses,

quizzes, lock-ins, and examination before the elders—

here I am telling you not to get drunk with wine, but to be full of the Spirit.

Why?

What’s getting drunk have to do with it?

And why are we talking about getting drunk in Church, of all places?!

Well, because today is the Feast of Pentecost.

And today we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Today you join 12 other men in confessing your faith.

And these 12, the Holy Apostles, were also mistaken for being drunk with wine (Acts 2:13).

Now, it’s right to want to be “filled” with something,

and the drunk rightly recognizes our need of something more:

something that fills and satisfies and intoxicates us (as alcohol and drugs do)¹—

but sorry, the Apostles weren’t drunk with wine

(or beer, whiskey, or bourbon, for that matter!),

it was only the 3rd hour of the day! (Acts 2:15)

These 12 Apostles were drunk with the Holy Spirit.

St. Peter quotes from the Prophet Joel,

The Lord had said, **“I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh”** (Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28).

The Spirit was *poured out* from Heaven to earth, onto the 12 Holy Apostles,

just like one pours a nice glass of Red Zin or Merlot.

And once the 12 were fully drunk with the Spirit,

they began to speak.

¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, BTCB (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2005), 50.

Now, if you've ever heard a drunk person try to talk, it's a bit ridiculous—
 they slur their words,
 they mumble and drool,
 and they say things you know they'll regret later—
 drunks aren't known for being eloquent, or communicating well.

But here on Pentecost you have 12 drunks
 (again, not with wine or booze, but with the Spirit),
 and their words are very unique.

They're so eloquent, in fact, so understandable,
 that when they open their mouths *everyone* understands them—
 Greeks, Asians, Jews, Africans, and Middle-Easterners!

And this isn't the first time this sort of thing happened—.

In our Old Testament reading for today it wasn't 12 who were drunk with the Spirit, but 70!

For this we'll need a little bit of context:

Moses has led the people of Israel out of Egypt—
 remember Moses saying to Pharaoh, "**Let my people go**" (Exod 5:1)?

And after 10 devastating plagues:

water turned to blood,
 frogs and gnats,
 flies and locusts,
 dead animals, boils, darkness, and hail,
 and finally the death of the firstborn—

after all of these Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and into the wilderness.

And so here we are, in the wilderness with Moses and a bunch of grumpy Israelites:
 and they're hungry.

Though they've been fed with Manna, that heavenly bread,
 they want more: they want some meat, a steak, some good bbq.

And just like whiney children, they start complaining to Moses,

"Oh that we had meat to eat!" they cried,
"We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic.
But now, here we are week with nothing at all to eat but this manna" (Num 11:5-6).

This made Moses furious—
 those ungrateful people!

How could they forget so quickly the blessings and deliverance of their God?

And Moses cried out to God and said,

**“Lord, do you hate me so much that you put me in charge of such a lousy bunch?
I can’t take it anymore, it’s too much for me”** (Num 11:11-12).

The Lord’s answer to Moses was that Moses should choose 70 men from the elders of the people—

70 who were faithful and trustworthy, hard workers and who could share the burden of this people with Moses (Num 11:16).

These 70 men would join Moses in hearing the complaints of the whiney Israelites. The 70 would together deal with this people.

And this now brings us to where we are in the Old Testament reading for today:

Moses went out, enlisted 70 men, wrote their names down and everything, and then called them to a meeting—

a meeting with Moses and with God Himself.

And at this meeting, something quite spectacular happened—

**“The Lord God Himself came down in a cloud and spoke to Moses,
and God took some of Moses’ Spirit and put it on the 70 elders.
And as soon as the Holy Spirit rested on them, they prophesied!”**
(Num 11:25)—

that is, they did the whole drunk talking thing we heard about earlier.

Now, there were only 68 men that actually came to this meeting.

Two of them, Eldad and Medad, stuck around at the camp—
they wanted to see how it would go for those at the meeting first.

But even though they tried to skip out on the meeting—

just as you will want to do many times in your life as well—
they too did the whole drunk-talk thing, even back at the camp.

Eldad and Medad started speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that everyone knew who they were—

they were part of the 70,
part of those who would share Moses’ burden.

Now when they did this,

when the 70 started to do the drunken preaching bit,
Joshua was a bit upset.

He was jealous for Moses’ sake—

this made Moses look weak, like he didn’t have as much power over the people.

Joshua has much to learn.

While the 70 Spirit-filled-drunken preachers proclaimed the “**mighty acts of God**” (Acts 2:11),

Joshua was worried about Moses’ self-image.

He didn’t realize that there were now 70 who spoke of what *God* has done for them—
they told about God’s work of delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians,
of providing them with daily bread free of charge,
of promising a land flowing with milk and honey,
where they would one day call home!

Now what does all of this have to do with us?

Well, we sometimes see ourselves as Joshua.

We’re the good, faithful, church-going types.

We’ve learned our Catechism,
memorized our Scripture passages,
and struggled our way through the exams.

If anyone deserves the credit, the glory, the honor—

it’s not Eldad and Medad who skipped out on a meeting with the Lord!—
it’s us!

And if not us, then at least not them!

Repent.

Repent Confirmands.

Repent all you Joshua type Christians!

This isn’t about *you*!—

it’s about what Christ our Lord does *for you*.

His is the honor and glory and power—

power even to use these Spirit-drunken preachers to proclaim the mighty acts of God!

We ought to learn from Moses’ humility,

“**Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets,
that the Lord would put His Spirit on them!**” (Num 11:29)

This, dear Confirmands, is what is fulfilled for you today!

Today is Pentecost.

Today the Spirit comes again to His Church,

filling the hearts of all His faithful people with His Spirit-filled-drunkenness!

Pentecost is the great reminder to the Church that You are Baptized!

And at your Baptism,

God “poured out His Spirit upon you” (Titus 3:5).

Confirmation very simply *confirms* this baptismal grace already given.

And though, Confirmands, it’s only about [8:30] 11:30 in the morning, be drunk—

don’t be drunk with wine, for that leads to your own pain and misery—

but be drunk with the Holy Spirit—

for that leads to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness,
faithfulness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).

After all, it is Pentecost;

would that the Holy Spirit come to you again and again and fill you up with His good gifts!

He’s done it once and He’ll do it again.

He loves you.

And through you he’ll proclaim His mighty acts of deliverance.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit