

ACTS SESSION IV

- I. The Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit—2:14–47
 - A. Peter’s explanatory sermon—2:14–39
 1. Pentecost is the fulfillment of the dying and rising of Jesus
 2. Pentecost completes the Lent-Easter season
 3. Pentecost inaugurates the “last days”.
 4. “Awaiting” the Lord’s return, the church is called to “Go” to evangelize the nations (see Luke 24:49 and Mt. 28:18-20)
 5. Pentecost fulfills Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2) and Ezek. 36:24-26
 6. The gifts of the Spirit, signs and wonders that were found in the ministry of Jesus, now in the Church as indications of “heaven visiting earth”. (See Mark 16:15-20)
 7. Repentance, faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, and baptism makes possible the reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit
- II. The new church after Pentecost—2:40–47
 - A. The Church born out of the wounded side of Jesus
 1. The Spirit is “breathed” upon the Church (See John 20:19ff).
 2. Luke gives us a picture of the early Church in Acts -a picture of life in the Christian communities, the first 30 years.
 - B. Elements of Christian community life
 1. Apostles’ teaching -most likely practical application of Jesus’ teaching to live the Christian life.
 2. Breaking of bread- Eucharist, gathering at mass
 3. Communal life-sharing of resources, fellowship through prayer and meals.
 4. Prayers-gathering at certain hours for prayer according to the inherited Jewish liturgical practice.

Reflection questions:

1. How would you describe the impact of the outpouring of the Spirit on the first Christians?
2. In the Liturgical season of Easter, the Catholic church proclaims as its first reading from the book of Acts. What do you think is the significance of this for today?
3. If we are living in the “last days” what becomes the essential imperative for the Church? Why?
4. Reflect on one of the four common elements of the first Christian communities. What would this impact be on the local Catholic parish today?

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