

O God be in my mouth as I speak for you, and fill this place with your great grace that we may leave this place less of what we used to be, and more of what we ought to be, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

There are certain expressions that instantly strike fear in the human heart.

Here are a couple: *Hello, Dad, they are only allowing me one phone call?*

*Or Mom, my boyfriend and I are calling from Vegas.*

But my personal favorite is the expression, “SOME ASSEMBLY REQUIRED”.

*Some assembly required.* When you hear these words what thoughts come to mind?

For me there is the anxiety of Christmas morning, your son or daughter looking impatiently at you, as you struggle to assemble something that the instructions swore would only take 15 minutes.

Through the years, I have also, discovered that most families have their own stories about some toy, or game that defied being assembled.

In McCard family lore, we always speak in hushed tones about the year my younger sister received a Barbie dream house.

Anybody here have one growing up? This was the mid-seventies version.

From the picture on the box, the house looked amazing.

It was three stories tall. There was an outside elevator and the latest in modern furniture.

Sadly though, after my dad, and my brother struggled, (and cursed the day that Barbie was ever born), the house remained only a dream.

Despite our sweat and toil, there was nothing to show for our efforts but a few cardboard walls, and a non-functioning elevator.

Of course, the expression “some assembly required” could just as well describe the half-finished church Jesus left behind prior to the first Pentecost.

Like most good managers, Jesus gave his followers specific instructions.

They were to go into the world telling others about the Good news of the resurrection, baptizing new believers and teaching them to follow Jesus’ teaching.

But Jesus’ sudden departure had left them with doubts and questions.

Were they supposed to stay in Jerusalem or go back to Galilee? Were they supposed to baptize folks first or teach them?

Did they have the right leadership team in place? Did they have enough funds for outreach in the annual budget?

After all remember, the treasurer of the group had committed suicide and the books were probably a mess.

I am sure that there was even someone at the first annual meeting who said they did not have enough money to do the job.

And besides they were frightened. The Romans had crucified their leader. It must have been tempting to hide out in the Upper Room, or contemplate running back to Nazareth, and waiting until things had calmed down.

Even though the new age had dawned, those first apostles looked out the window and said to themselves that even though Jesus had risen the world still needed a lot of assembly

But on that first Pentecost Sunday, God puts all those doubts to rest.

We hear a wonderful story how the uncertainty of those early followers was washed away by a mighty wind and tongues of fire.

In one startling moment through the gift of God's mighty spirit, God provides them the strength and courage they need to do the job.

Yes, some assembly was still required, but that is precisely why Jesus had left them.

He knew that people didn't value things they were simply given.

People matured in their spiritual lives when they took up that cross, and when they received God's spirit.

In fact the message of Pentecost is not only about the birthday of the Christian church.

Pentecost reminds us that in a world that still suffers and cries out for justice we each have an important role to play.

The obstacles we face are no more challenging than the ones the apostles faced after Jesus' departure; a hostile world, problems settled by the sword (or missiles), and the constant threat of terrorism.

But through the power of God's Spirit I am confident that we have been given everything we need to do the job.

Even in those difficult times in our lives when we feel like a half-assembled dream house lying on the floor.

Despite the “half assembled qualities of our lives”, God is able to do wonders through us if we look for those tongues of fire and feel that wind blowing, reminding us of God’s spirit and renewing presence.

In a few moments we will be baptizing six young children: Charlotte Skutch, Rex Ramsey, Caroline Granata, Abigail Capriotti, Jackson Winter and Audrey Winter.

As they begin their new life in Christ, we are reminded they too are unfinished products.

We welcome them into the body of Christ, and remind ourselves that like many of us, they did not come with very good instructions.

Yet we are all here this morning to help them begin that journey of finding God’s purpose for their lives.

They will learn about Christian love in our midst, they will learn about serving others by the example we give them.

Most importantly though, they will see us make mistakes, confess our sins and seek forgiveness and reconciliation with each other.

And this takes place in the context of this St. Martin’s church community.

In sharing the Spirit through baptism, we invite them to begin a life of that won’t always look like the picture on the box.

But it will be a life guided by God’s promise, God’s love and one that continually challenges them to put aside their fears, leave the upper room, and help them realize that everyone’s life needs some assembly.