

Have you noticed that there are few young people at Mass? We no longer have a youth group in our community. This is true in our Spanish speaking community as well.

There was an article in last week's Evangelist entitled, "Are you happy?" It quotes a survey taken in 2019 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stating that 36.7% of high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness. By June 2021 that number increased to 44.2%. Nearly 20% of the youth surveyed considered suicide. We're talking here about American youth who live in a land of plenty.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of Pentecost. This is the day when our risen Lord Jesus, having ascended to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit upon the infant church.

It occurs to me that every one of us is possessed by a spirit. For example we may be possessed by a spirit of joy, a spirit of love, of restlessness, of loneliness and so on. Hopefully each of us is possessed by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit!

It seems that many of our youth are affected, are possessed by a spirit of sadness even hopelessness. What is this all about? How can this be? What can we do?

Surely, we want them to be possessed by a different Spirit. How will this happen? How will this happen in a country of gun violence and racism and abortion?

I believe it begins with us. We need to be deeply aware of God's Holy Spirit within us, alive within us! (The more we become aware the more able we are to pass this gift of the Spirit on to our youth. We need to be aware that the Holy Spirit is praying within us, to pay attention to the promptings of the Holy Spirit leading us to wisdom, to light, to love.

Imagine! The spirit of sadness would be lifted from our youth if they were aware that God's Spirit enters their hearts as they receive Holy Communion!

I hope we can develop a conversation about our youth in the days to come. We really can make a difference!

“Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of Your Faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Send forth Your Spirit and we shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth!”

Especially Holy Spirit we pray for our youth!