*A reading from the Book of Genesis (Gen 1:1-9).*

Now at that time the whole earth had one language and the same words.

And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar (pronounced SHE-nar), and they settled there.

And they said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly,’ And they had brick for stone and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.’

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which mortals had built. And the Lord said, ‘Look, they are one people, and they all have one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.’

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they stopped building the city. Therefore it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

The word of the Lord.

R.: Thanks be to God.

**Reflections for the feast of Pentecost**

The reading from the Sacred Scriptures is from the Book of Genesis 11:1-9

1. Pentecost is best remembered if we return to the Old Testament, to the book of Genesis and to a story we may remember from our childhood.

2. The imaginative story is that of the towner of Babel.

3. The story has a background

* 1. Genesis, chapter 1. The first of two accounts of creation. This first account focuses on the world: sun, moon, stars, water, earth. This account affirms that God is the creator of all. We are responsible for all God’s creation and will have to return it to God and amount for it.
  2. Genesis, chapter 2. This is the second account of creation. It focuses on the human family.
  3. Genesis, chapter 3. The first ‘sin’ and its punishment are narrated for us.
  4. Genesis, chapter 4. Sin becomes more prevalent. Cain kills his brother Abel. God asks Cain: ‘Where is your brother?” Cain responds by asking God: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”
  5. Genesis, chapter 5. Adam’s descendants are named as are Noah’s. Adam has displeased God but Noah is found to be a good man.
  6. Genesis, chapter 6. The Lord regrets that he has created humankind. “And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. So the Lord said, ‘I will blot out from the earth the human beings I have created – people together with animals and creeping things and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have ad them’.” Genesis 6:6-7. God feels that he has made a mistake. But God is willing to start over. Noah pleases God.
  7. Genesis, chapter 7. The great flood.
  8. Genesis, chapter 8. The flood subsides.
  9. Genesis, chapter 9. God makes a covenant with Noah. God promises that he/she will never do such a thing again (the great flood which destroys everything).
  10. Genesis, chapter 10. The world is populated and people are on the move all over the world. (cf. Gen 1:28).
  11. Genesis, chapter 11. People from the East (mysterious place; people who come from the East have no ethnic or religious identity) settle in the Plain of Shinar. They start to build a city and a tower that will give them admittance to heaven – to God’s realm.

Refer to the details of the story.

* 1. Genesis, chapter 12. The literary genre of chapters 1 through 11 – stories about creation and our history – changes. This chapter introduces the rest of the Old Testament with the call of Abram.

1. The story of Babel asks two questions:
   1. Is the Lord punishing a prideful people for making a name for themselves and building a city and a tower?, or,
   2. Has the Lord has come down to deal with a people who refuse to journey onward toward their own lands? God forces them to move on.

**⁜**

1. Luke’s account of the Pentecost event reveres the story of the tower of Babel. Cf. Acts of the Apostles, 2:1-13.
2. We are a people on the move. And in many ways we don’t know how – or we’ve lost the ability – to communicate and have a language which we all understand. We are broken in many ways. Let’s consider three locales of brokenness.
   1. U.S.A.

We are a country on the move. This week now ending was a week of terror, horror and contradiction.

* + 1. George Floyd’s death was murder. It was upsetting and

jarring. Our government’s response was equally upsetting and jarring. I don’t hesitate to say – and I don’t apologize for my feeling - that for me the president’s use of the bible as a tool was just short of being an act akin to the desecration of the Eucharist because we revere the word of God as God himself/herself speaking to us!

* + 1. What language are we speaking when police stand face to

face with peaceful protesters and troops – our own – stand

against us face to face?

* + 1. Unidentified vigilantes walk our streets
    2. Racism prevails?
    3. Segregation rears its ugly head. “Europeans consider us now

to be an ugly nation.” by Robert Mickens, Rome

correspondent of Paris based independent *La Croix.*

Immigration, health, education, climate – and others

* 1. Our church

We are a church on the move.

Power structure of the church – what tower are we building?

Francis versus the resistance of right: E.g., The Napa

Institute.

Pope Francis trying to change – not doctrine but way we hear and accept it and live it.

Principle of subsidiarity

*Pacem In Terris* (April, 1963) of John XXIII

Encyclicals of John Paul II

*Laudato Si* (2015) of Pope Francis

*Principle of s*ynodality

Communication among bishops with people

* 1. Personal

We are on the move. How?

What language do we peak?

What language does our heart speak?

What language does our soul speak?

What do our actions say?

What is our ethic Our moral value?

**⁜**

Pentecost commemorates the giving of the Law on Sinai.

What is the language of the God-given law?

**In Genesis story people had stopped moving.**

**In Acts of Apostles people were gathered in Jerusalem. It was time for God to come back down for a visit. Spirit told people to move!**

**READ ACTS 2:1-11.**

The language common to those who believe is charity. All can hear. All can understand.