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Dear Parishioners; I ran into a parishioner last week whom I have known for years, and his only real flaw is that he is a rabid Montreal Canadians fan. He was in line Sunday morning for communion, so we didn't have a lot of time to discuss the Leafs and the Canadians as they play their first playoff game against each other in 42 years, so as he was driving a way I said to him; "I hope you have a rotten week." And he yelled back; "Same to you."

If I am talking to a person of a certain age and they tell me that they are a Canucks fan or an Oiler fan, I say to them; "I bet I can tell you who you use to cheer for." Because you see, when there were only 6 NHL teams, you were either a Leaf fan or you were a Canadians fan.

And when the league expanded into Vancouver, Edmonton and Winnipeg, Harold Ballard, the General Manager of the Leafs, was running the franchise into the ground, and so Leaf fans migrated to their new teams. But because the Canadians kept winning (sigh), their fans had no reason to seek solace elsewhere.

(The reason that we have two hockey games on Saturday night is because the CBC always wanted to show the Leafs, but they were so bad that they had no business being on TV, and so the CBC compromised and started broadcasting all Canadian teams more fairly, as they should have.)

So when I tell the person that they used to be a Leaf fan, they would often say; "They are my second team." I don't know if people think that anymore. As a Leaf fan I feel that I am owed more than one Stanley Cup. So I keep my hopes and expectations hidden away, where missed calls (Gretzky) and stupid penalties can't get them. My only reward really, has been my own faithfulness.

(Boy, did it take me along time to get this to a segue.) Our relationship with God can be like that, especially when we are living what I have been assured is our Golden Years. This Sunday is Pentecost

Sunday. And it is often referred to as the Birthday of the Church, when Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit to the disciples and says; “...*the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and **remind you** of all that I have said to you.*”

The problem with this promise, and with the gift of faith, is that the secret ingredient, as Jesus stresses many times, is persistence. Just look at Jesus’ slogan; “Pick up your crosses and follow me.” There isn’t a PR firm in the world that would suggest such a line to encourage followers, and yet Jesus does.

This journey of ours can feel endless and sometimes we can lose the point of this wondering, especially when the whole thing is overshadowed by a pandemic. But wonderfully, one of the jobs of the Holy Spirit, is to remind us when we forget. The Spirit’s job is to encourage us and to help us find the light that reminds us that God knows exactly what God is doing and what God is asking of us this day.

The following is called the Sequence that is often sung before the Gospel is read on Pentecost Sunday, that reminds us that the Holy Spirit is only successful when the Spirit encourages us and keeps us close;

Holy Spirit, Lord divine, come from heights of heaven and shine, come with blessed radiance bright. / Come, O Father of the poor, come whose treasured gifts ensure, come our heart’s unfailing light. / Of consolers, wisest, best, and our soul’s most welcomed guest, sweet refreshment, sweet repose. / In our labour, rest most sweet, pleasant coolness in the heat, consolation in our woes. / Light most blessed, shine with grace, in our heart’s most secret place, fill your faithful through and through. / Left without your presence here, life itself would disappear, nothing thrives apart from you! / Cleanse our soiled hearts of sin, arid souls refresh within, wounded lives to health restore. / On the faithful who are true and profess their faith I you, in your sevenfold gift descend. / Bend the stubborn heart and will, melt the frozen warm the chill, guide the wayward home once more! / Give us virtue’s sure reward, give us your salvation Lord, give us joys that never end!

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.

Pat Monette/Pastor