

**Homily for the Red Mass**  
**Co-Cathedral of St. Thomas More in Tallahassee, Florida**  
**by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez**  
**January 29, 2020**

The Scriptures, in Galatians 5:22, state that “the fruit of the Holy Spirit is love.” Of course, this is selfless love, sacrificial love, virtuous love, a love that builds unity and community. The simplest prayer to the Holy Spirit is, “Come Holy Spirit, come to us.” A song written in 1878 dwells on a desire for the coming of the Spirit to us:

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what You love,  
And do what You would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Until my heart is pure,  
Until with You I will one will,  
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
Till I am wholly Yours,  
Until this earthly part of me  
Glows with Your fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
So shall I never die,  
But live with You the perfect life  
Of Your eternity.

By virtue of our baptism, St. Paul says that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, we have been anointed with Holy Chrism. The sacrament of confirmation gives us the anointing of the Holy Spirit – The Paraclete. (The Comforter, our Defensor, our Advocate, our Consoler). The Spirit comes to our aid and, as stated by Isaiah, the anointing gives us the spirit of wisdom and understanding, counsel and fortitude, knowledge and piety, and fear of the Lord. The Spirit sets us on fire for the mission to be light, to be salt, to make a difference in our community.

Every year I look forward to coming together with my brother bishops of the seven dioceses of Florida together with all of you who come year after year for the Capitol Days to celebrate with you this Mass of the Holy Spirit, praying especially for our civic leaders elected to serve the State of Florida. The Catholic Church has a rich vision of a society, that in the words of St. Augustine can become a city worthy of God’s blessings. This vision can be summarized in eight principles:

1. God and only God is the author of every human life, and only God should determine the end of that life, for every human life has intrinsic value from conception to natural death since every

human person is made in the image and likeness of God. Saint John Paul II said in his homily in St. Louis, Missouri: “a sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.” As Blessed Charles de Foucauld said, “The synthesis of the Gospel can be found in one sentence: As you did it to one of the least of my brethren – who can be more the least than the unborn – you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40. And as Pope St. John XXIII said in *Pacem in Terris*, “This human dignity calls for certain rights, such as food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and other necessary social services.” (#11)

2. Since we live in society, the more we interact peacefully with one another, we develop our own personal potential. The good of each one is necessarily related to the common good, which is always oriented to the progress of persons, not the other way around. (GS 25)
3. Work is part of our human dignity. Technology should not make the laborer dependent on technology. Workers can never be seen as a means to an end for the dignity of the worker takes priority over capital.
4. We should never forget the suffering of humanity. This includes the poor and the most vulnerable, the sick, the refugee, the migrant, the unemployed, the elderly, the unborn, all those in the peripheries of society, such as the prisoners who instead of experiencing inhumane and cruel situations could find rehabilitation and hope.
5. The principle of subsidiarity is where matters are to be handled by the smallest, lowest, and least competent authority.
6. The principle of justice seeks a way that both benefits business and community enhancing democracy as a free society under God as we do when we say the pledge of allegiance in our gatherings.
7. The principle of solidarity ... we care for our own needs for the needs of our family, but we cannot be indifferent to the needs of others in our country and the world. We are inter-dependent in our care for people as well as our planet, our common home which is in great need of our protection.
8. The duty to care for the environment and the planet ... as Pope Francis urges us in *Laudato Si* to act in favor of human beings from conception to natural death and natural ecology where family values have a distinctive priority. We truly need education in environmental responsibility as good stewards of creation within a culture of life framework.

We are indeed blessed to live in the sunshine state with peace and freedom, with the order, safety, and security, thanks be to God. Thanks be to those who keep it that way. May the Holy Spirit come to the aid of those serving our state with wisdom, knowledge, counsel, and fortitude so that we all discern accurately the true path that conforms to what is right and true, “judging the poor with justice and deciding a right for the land’s afflicted” as Isaiah called us to do in tonight’s reading.

Todos queremos una Sociedad según las palabras del Venerable Padre Felix Varela al final de sus Cartas a Elpidio: “una Sociedad es verdaderamente libre cuando esta animada del verdadero espíritu evangelico como lo dice San Pablo en la 2 Corintios 3, 17: donde esta el Espiritu del Señor alli hay libertad”

Recently Pope Francis warned us about the temptation of efficiency ... saying that the Spirit does not come bearing an agenda; it comes like fire. May we all be fired up in the depths of our hearts to discern with courage what is best for the State of Florida radiating the light of the Gospel to all.

In conclusion, let me invite you to pray with St. Augustine the Prayer to the Holy Spirit:

Come O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.  
Act in me O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.  
Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.  
Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.  
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.  
Come Holy Spirit, come.