

You May Never Forget "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

There is a delightful story about a mother who bought a ticket to a concert by Ignace Paderewski, the great Polish pianist. She took her five-year-old son with her, hoping the experience would encourage him in his own young efforts at music. She was delighted to see how close to the stage their seats were. Then she met an old friend and got so involved talking with her that she failed to notice that her son had slipped away to do some exploring.

When eight o'clock arrived, the lights dimmed, the audience hushed to a whisper, and the spotlight came on. Only then did the woman see her five-year-old on the stage, sitting on the piano bench, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." She gasped in total disbelief. But before she could retrieve her son, Paderewski walked onto the stage. Walking over to the piano, he whispered to the boy, "Don't stop! Keep playing!" Then, leaning over the boy, Paderewski reached out his left hand and began to fill in the bass. A few seconds later, he reached around the other side of the boy, encircling him, and added a running obbligato.

Together, the great maestro and the tiny five-year-old mesmerized the audience with their playing. When they finished, the audience broke into thunderous applause. Years later almost all those present forgot the pieces that Paderewski played that night, but no one forgot "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

That image of the great maestro and the tiny five-year-old at the piano makes a beautiful image of the Holy Spirit and the Church. It makes a beautiful image of how the Holy Spirit unites with the Church to make beautiful music.

Today we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, just as Jesus had promised when he said: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth. He will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you

"I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe." John 14:16-17, 26, 29

Going back to the image of Paderewski and the five-year-old, we see that the boy resembles the disciples. When Jesus departed from their midst, they were like spiritual children. Their knowledge of God and how to spread God's kingdom was terribly deficient. It was like the little boy's knowledge of music. And, of course, the great Polish maestro resembles the Holy Spirit coming upon the disciples, encircling them with love, whispering encouragement to them, and transforming their feeble human efforts into something beautiful.

There's a tremendous lesson here. We look at the world and see so many problems that need to be addressed. We also look at our talents and see how inadequate they are in the face of these problems. When we see how inadequate we are when confronted with the problems in our own lives and those in the whole world, it is here that we need to recall the

image of the little boy and Paderewski.

Musically, the little boy's skill was minimal. But Paderewski built upon it and turned it into something beautiful, something that completely mesmerized the sophisticated audience that gathered in the hall that night. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit can take whatever we have, no matter how small, build upon it, and transform it into something powerful and beautiful. This is the good news contained in today's Scripture readings. This is the good news that we celebrate on this feast of Pentecost. It is the good news that Jesus has sent upon his Church the promised Holy Spirit. We are not alone. The Holy Spirit is leaning over us, taking our small contribution, and transforming it into something that we never dreamed possible.

When we know in our heart that:

We are not alone when we face personal tragedies,
We are not helpless when our community goes astray,
We are not powerless when the world seems to have lost its way.
It is true that "Alone we are only a spark.
But in "the Spirit we are a fire."

When you come afire with the Holy Spirit, you will know that...

YOU ARE LOVE. (Jn 3: 16)

Deacon Dan

*Story as retold by Fr. Mark Link