READINGS: Acts 10:25–26, 34–35, 44–48 / 1 John 4:7–10/ John 15: 9–17
**Theme:** Led by the Holy Spirit!
6th Sunday of Easter

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Coming Thursday, Ascension Day, will be the beginning of the Pentecost Novena. Taking a cue from the experience of St. Cornelius (first reading), let us learn how we can allow the Holy Spirit to lead us.

**CORNELIUS’ EXPERIENCE:**

We could say that Cornelius started walking far behind the Holy Spirit, but he eventually reached the point of walking abreast with the Holy Spirit (as gathered from today’s first reading).  He began, even without knowing that the Holy Spirit existed, but he did the good things the Spirit inspired in his heart; and he ended up embracing the Good News preached by St. Peter and consciously experiencing the Holy Spirit.

What are some of the things Cornelius was doing which showed that he was following the ‘lead’ of the Spirit without knowing it? Firstly, even at a time that he – a Roman/gentile – did not know Jesus as the Saviour of the world, Cornelius worshipped the only true God (Acts 10:1-4).  Thus, he followed from afar the ‘lead’ of the Spirit.

Secondly, he was a man of prayer (Acts 10:1-5), who fasted occasionally (Acts 10:30).  This was certainly inspired by the Spirit, who enables us to pray (Rom. 8:15-16, 26-27).

Thirdly, Cornelius was fond of giving alms (Acts 10:2, 4).  God is love and he has shown us his love by offering his only Son; he, in turn, commands us to love one another, according to today’s second reading.  This commandment of love is repeated twice in today’s gospel reading.  And a practical way to show love to another person who is in need is to give him/her alms.  It was therefore certainly the Spirit of God who led Cornelius to be charitable to the needy.

Fourthly, the Jews in those days considered the Romans, their colonial masters, as their ‘enemies’.  So it is amazing that Acts 10:22 says that Cornelius had a good reputation even among the Jews.  A life-style endearing to one’s enemies was certainly inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, according to Acts 10:2, Cornelius was ‘a devout man and one who feared God with ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD.’ He might have even influenced some of his subordinate Roman soldiers to worship Yahweh (cf. Acts 10:7).  Only a person led by the Spirit can lead others to the Living God.

Thus, through the worship of the only true God, prayer and fasting, works of charity, good life-style and attracting souls for God, among others, the Holy Spirit was leading Cornelius from afar, and drawing him closer and closer to Himself.  Eventually, then, Cornelius arrived at the point of walking abreast with the Holy Spirit: as St. Peter preached the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ, the Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his household and they were baptized.

Beloved where are we in our walk with the Spirit?  Many of us here started walking with the Spirit even as infants, or at least, many years ago, when we were baptized.  The question is: are we still walking abreast with the Spirit through worshipping only God, prayers and fasting, good lifestyle, charity and winning souls for Christ, among other things?  Or are we far behind the Spirit like a friend driving ahead of us, and we losing him because of the traffic?

**CONCLUSION:**

Beloved, I pray that:
– if we have lost sight of the Spirit, probably because we are not even doing half of what the yet-to-be-Christian Cornelius was doing, the Spirit will give us a fresh start, like a friend who drives his car off the road to wait of us to catch up with him/her;
– if we have not lost sight of the Spirit but we are far behind his ‘lead’, we will double up our steps by doing all that Cornelius did; and
– if we are already walking abreast with the Spirit, we shall begin to walk hand-in-hand, by opening up more and more to the enlightenment and unconditional love that He pours out into our hearts.  Amen.