Korean-American Catholics for an Ongoing Pentecost
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The theme of “Korean-American Catholics for an ongoing Pentecost” reflects their lived experience as well as a continuing challenge.

KAC have been monocultural or bicultural at best. How KAC are to live out the catholicity of the faith is a challenge. KAC cannot continue to subscribe to an entrenchment mentality in isolation. What are KAC pastoral challenges to practice catholicity?

Being *multicultural* designates the status quo, but being *intercultural* points to where we want to go and how we want to become as a faith community with one another.
Intro

- Being intentionally intercultural, reaching out to one another is to practice catholicity of our faith, that is, thinking and acting according to the whole. The Holy Spirit shows the way.

- I propose that Pentecost is to be a quintessential American feast to be realized and celebrated as such at all times.

- There are cultural and spiritual elements and ethos that are peculiar and distinct to KAC and at the same time salient to contribute to the common good of the Church universal.
Outline

- Where we are
- How to become what we need to be
- Where to go & how to get there
I. Where we are

- **Where we are:** The Holy Spirit constitutes the Church ever anew, which remains provisional and proleptic.

- This resonates among KAC in their current transient status.
Church: radically new

- Church as a radically new human community in via
  - The Church is therefore always on the move, remembering the origin and working towards its goal. The church has to be *ecclesia semper reformanda*, reorganizing and remaking herself.
  - The characteristics of the apostolic church in Jerusalem as described in the Acts reveal the **radically transformed self-understanding** of the early Christians and hint at a **new human community and a new humanity**.
Church radically new

- Jesus envisions a new human family not divided on ethnic, religious, gender or linguistic lines. In the Incarnation, Jesus crosses the border between the divine and human, between the eternal and the temporal. Border crossing is most clear in the Pentecost event.

- The Holy Spirit offers an eschatological hope to be experienced and realized now. The holy Spirit provides a new meeting ground for dialogue and exchange of various cultural groups.
Korean Americans

- The ever-changing landscape among Korean immigrants is apparent, which demands an appropriate pastoral response:
- Immigrants are likely to carry a sense of cosmic loneliness. The perception as perpetual foreigners or outsiders irks and embarrasses many U.S.-born Korean-Americans. They may be underemployed, and possibly face the glass ceiling problem, or the bamboo ceiling.
- Getting some traction in upward mobility, gaining some political influence is a preoccupation especially among KA elites.
Church’s role for KAC

- the community of faith is central to the lived experience of being Korean-American.
- The church becomes an ethnic, cultural, social, and spiritual hub and home for most immigrants.
- Does the church for KAC exemplify the radically new human community? Reimage a new way of being church.
II. How to become what we need to be

- The Holy Spirit as the go-between God shows the way of the church; KAC as in-between people – bridging, relating, connecting, reconciling, healing, uniting, bond of love
Holy Spirit shows the way

- “The Spirit is communion (*koinonia*), sharing, participation, fellowship in the Trinitarian life (2 Cor 13:13; 1 John 1:1-10; 3:23-24). Without the mission of the Spirit there is neither communion with God, nor communion among believers.” Thus, the church exists only through ongoing epiclesis.

- John Taylor says: “he is communion itself.... the Holy Spirit brings us into more vivid contact with one another and with God while remaining imperceptible himself.”
Holy Spirit shows the way

- That is why we say the Spirit is about how, while Christ is about what.
- The Holy Spirit who consoles the broken-hearted, who unites and reconciles all.
- Dialogue with other Christian branches and other religions is to imitate God who initiates and continue the dialogue of salvation.
KAC to overcome disconnect

- the lack of proper pastoral leadership for their specific pastoral context, while the laity languished as spiritual orphans, a sheep with a shepherd.
- Many priests serving KAC communities often arrive here unprepared.
- Lay Catholics have a Protestant congressional temperament of ‘hire and fire’ of its clergy.
- KAC parishes/communities often tend to be insular and separated.
- Korean-American Protestants’ rejection of culture in favor of Christianity vs. Catholic inculturation approach. It does not have to be ‘either or’, but ‘both and.’
KAC to work as a bridge

- For KAC it is not so much about *what* but about *how* that is critical. Now the church needs to the training ground of communion, encountering Christ and exercising the love of neighbor.

- What is crucial is seeing the connection between the gospel and a culture, bridging between generations, between the church in Korea and the church in the US. The hyphenated and transnational identity of KAC may help in undertaking their bridging mission.

- Korean American Priests Association (KAPA) in recent years has been a bridge and healer.
In pursuit of the Lukan vision of the church

- No church is autonomous but related to the church universal. A positive ecumenical and catholic progress is the growing concentric circles of communions through hierarchical communion, through intercultural communion, through cooperation in works of charity, and through theological communion and dialogue. API Clergy Association & KAC theologians group.
The Lukan vision

- Beyond the concerns of the community of Matthew, KAC need to positively promote and practice the vision, spirituality and ecclesiology of Luke, universal in scope, attentive to the people on the margin. In this global age, Luke presents good news to the poor with his all embracing pneumatological ecclesiology, showing us how we are to relate to one another with the gospel of mercy.
III. Where to go & How to get there

- The signs of the times for a new Pentecost
  - A prominent sign is the theology of context. Cultural diversity is a new sign of the time, exposing us to the newness of God, which also suggests a way of being the church.
  - Establishing intercultural parishes is a new pastoral, spiritual, and theological challenge. Recognizing the diversity, exercising hospitality, sharing resources, and collaborating in parish strategic planning are necessary in working towards the catholic unity.
  - The current phenomenon of broadening the definition and mission of American culture and church is another sign of the times.
Vatican II: the key sign

- Vatican II is definitely the key sign of the times for the church and the world, working for a new Pentecost. The church of Vatican II reaches out to the margins that are constantly moving.
- Jesus went to the peripheries, the outcast, the poor, prisoners and the sick, for those who are sorrowing and alone. Francis urges us to be “the poor church,” “a church for the poor.”
- The debate on the “option for the poor” redraws the boundaries of the church.

- This means establishing purposeful community of disciples, attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible in receiving God’s gift of love and fulfilling our mission
KAC contributions

- KAC are peculiarly strong and insistent in establishing their own faith communities which is a “vital contribution to the overall ecclesial mission of evangelization” (Fr. Joseph Kim).
- This manifests their entrepreneurship, taking initiatives, especially among lay people.
- Another contribution of KAC is the formation of dynamic small communities in every parish.
- Energy, enthusiasm, momentum, missionary zeal,
New KAC models

- New models beyond conventional KAC communities:
  - balancing generations (St. Thomas),
  - shared intercultural parishes (St. Bellarmine, Epiphany, St. Jude), adapting to the changing environment and pastoral needs and building the house together.
  - regional outreach of CUNAE young adult charismatic ministry,
  - campus ministries
KAC challenges

- Beyond monocultural enclaves and ghettos, KAC need to envision the future of intercultural communities, realizing the call for the catholic unity. Inclusion, not exclusion, is the new key to the understanding the church.

- Beyond socio-economic-political preoccupation of moving up, beyond upward mobility, KAC need to attend to the brokenhearted, the poor, the neglected, and the marginalized, not just as objects of our mercy, but because they are our brothers and sisters.

- A view from the center and above vs. a view from the periphery and from below. Jesus as a marginal Jew urges a new perspective.
KAC challenges

- KAC are weak on the Catholic social doctrine, which promotes a solidary and integral Christian humanism. Christian salvation is for all people and the whole person.
- Pastoral plans and theological endeavors need to be more contextual, ecumenical, intercultural, relational, and dialogical so as to be catholic.
Reaching down & Reaching out

- Catholics as well as the whole world are sensing a radical new beginning especially through the graced leadership of Pope Francis. He invites Catholics and other Christians to a new way of being church, through a radical turn to the roots, *ressourcement* (spiritual renewal and fidelity to the gospel) and a horizontal turn to one another in *rapprochement* (love of neighbor, reaching out to the end of the world). Reaching down to our sources and roots (in depth), reaching out to others especially on the margin (ad extra) is the ongoing task presented by Vatican II.
New community in perichoresis

- The early church formed by the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost reveals the **radically transformed self-understanding** of the early Christians and hints at a **new human community and a new humanity**. This is not just an idyllic and ideal utopia but a reality realized and ever to be realized. The risen Christ sends the Holy Spirit from the Father brings forth our communion with the Divine Persons and with one another. The Holy Spirit enables our mutual indwelling, while dancing with one another in the ecstasy of love – perichoresis.
A spiritual person is a relating and relational person. The church is the community of spiritually reborn people on the journey. The divinely initiated movement to engage us into a loving union with God and with one another is the raison d’être of the Church. The church’s mission is to expand the concentric circles of communion in time and space. The Holy Spirit ever keeps us on our toes in the sacred tension of the already and the not yet, that is, what we have become and what we need to be, how we have been and how we must be.