

From the Deacon's Desk

2018 Graduates:

All of those in the Parish who are graduating from high school or college this year are invited to join for a special Baccalaureate Mass on Sunday June 10th. Please call the office or talk to Mary Moomey and let us know who you are, so we can send you a special invitation and recognize you in our parish bulletin.

Scripture Today: Pentecost

Traditionally, we identify Pentecost Sunday as the birthday of the Church—that is, our birth as the people of God. Today's first reading (Acts 2:1-11) tells the story of this event which takes place forty days after the Resurrection.

Note that Luke—who wrote Acts as well as the Gospel that bears his name—is the only New Testament author to describe this event, which leaves some scholars wondering why that is. Regardless of the questions surrounding the literal interpretation of “wind” and “flames,” however, our main concern should be with the story's inspired *meaning*. For Luke, this story is the fulfillment of the prophecy of John the Baptist: “He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire” (Luke 3:16b).

Luke begins his account with the observation that “they were all in one place together” (2:1). The theme of unity is an important one. For Luke, the “holy Spirit” comes not to isolated individuals but to the community.

Next, Luke says that “suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were” (2:2). The point here is that what is happening is of earth-shaking significance, and like the wind, it comes out of nowhere.

Then, “there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them” (2:3). In Exodus 19:18, fire symbolizes the presence of God at the beginning of the covenant on Sinai. Here, “tongues as of fire” symbolize the action of the Spirit preparing the apostles to proclaim the new covenant with its gift of the Spirit, and like fire, the Spirit is hard to control or contain.

Finally, “devout Jews from every nation” (2:5) miraculously hear the gospel being proclaimed to them, no matter what language they speak. For the gospel is intended for “every nation under heaven” (2:5).

For reasons known only to those who put together the Lectionary, verses 12 and 13 are left out of today’s reading, even though they obviously belong there. These two final verses leave us pondering the responses of those who heard the message of the gospel today: “They were all astounded and bewildered, but said to one another, ‘what does all this mean?’ But others said scoffing, ‘They have had too much new wine’” (2:12-13).

Would that we could respond with such astonishment and bewilderment when we hear the Gospel. Would that we could puzzle over it, saying, “What does all this mean?” Would that our own joy and behavior at hearing the gospel might prompt others to say about us, “Look at how those Catholics behave . . . I want what they have!”

As we celebrate Pentecost, or the birthday of the Church, we will see how Jesus conferred this power given to him, upon his disciples. Upon doing so, the God-with-us, begun at the incarnation, will continue to be with us and the world until the end of time.

The great missionary commission is straightforward and all-encompassing, and the disciples are told to go out and make disciples of all nations. Christ who ascended into heaven in his body, has also entered his new body, the Church, in a new way here on earth. Into the hearts of his disciples on earth, the body of Christ continues to be seen and revealed in ever newer ways. Christ continues to teach through his apostles and evangelists. He ministers through his prophets and pastors. In and through the Church Jesus continues to heal and to comfort; to forgive and to include. We have not been left alone; we have his power, the same power which worked in him during his earthly life.

As we continue to discuss and talk about how we as a Church will respond to the need for a new evangelization, may we continue to model what Jesus showed us, and look for opportunities to give glory and honor to God, by revealing his presence to all those we meet.

Clerical and Pastoral Assignments:

Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone, bishop of Saginaw, announces the following clerical and parish assignments, effective July 2, 2018.

Reverend **Jerome Green**, newly ordained, from Pastoral Administrator, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shepherd to Pastor St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Reese and St. Frances Cabrini Parish, Vassar.

Deacon **Todd Lovas**, to Pastoral Administrator, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shepherd.