

A Message from Fr. Roberto

New Pastor and Parochial Vicar for Holy Rosary

I imagine the word has spread to most of the parish by now, but just in case you hadn't heard, Bishop Barber has appointed **Fr. Ramiro Flores** as the new pastor of Holy Rosary. Father Ramiro has been pastor of St. Mark's in Richmond for 12 years. His Parochial Vicar will be **Jimmy Macalinao**, a seminarian who will be ordained to the priesthood on May 25 at the Cathedral. Fr. Ramiro and Fr. Jimmy will arrive at Holy Rosary in early July.

Never Stop Growing!

One of the things I really enjoy about the Easter Season (which lasts for 7 weeks – until Pentecost Sunday, May 20th), is hearing from the Acts of the Apostles at Sunday Mass about the growth of the early Christian community. The disciples were transformed by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and they were unstoppable in preaching about Jesus and in living the new life they found in him. This is one of the summary statements Luke gives about that early Christian community:

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

Of course, this Scripture gives an overly generalized and idealistic picture of that community because just a few chapters later in Acts there is bickering and even dishonesty among some of the early Christians. However, it is still an ideal for which all parish communities and all Christians should strive. So, let me ask you, do any of the above-mentioned phrases describe you and your faith as a Catholic Christian? Are you **“devoted...to the teaching of the apostles,”** i.e., to the Bible and the teachings of the Church? Are you **“devoted...to the communal life?”** In other words, are you committed to this church community here at Holy Rosary? Are you committed to **“the breaking of the bread and to the prayers,”** i.e., do you come to Mass and pray regularly?

With good reason, we Catholics focus a lot on our faith during Lent. We make extra sacrifices and do extra things to deepen our faith. However, growing in our faith should not simply be limited to Lent; we should never stop growing in our faith. Therefore, I would like to encourage all of us to continue our spiritual growth during this Easter Season. One thing you can do is read the Acts of the Apostles and see how you can imitate those early Christians and



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grow in your understanding of what it means to be a disciple of the Lord, what it means to be a Catholic.

Sadly, so many Catholics stop learning about our Catholic faith when we graduate from Catholic school or when we finish with CCD classes or when we are confirmed as teenagers. When was the last time you read a book or at least an article from a Catholic magazine or on

the Internet about your faith? I also believe that many Catholics leave our Church for other denominations or religions because they simply do not know our amazing faith well enough. How many times have Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons come to your door to challenge your Catholic faith? Would you know how to explain your faith to them or would you just pretend not to be at home? How many times have your friends or family members or co-workers or classmates asked you questions like: "Why do you Catholics go to a priest for confession? Why do you honor Mary and the saints so much? Why do you obey the Pope? Why do you pray for souls in Purgatory? None of these things are in the Bible, so why do you believe them?" How would you answer these questions or others like them?

There are so many resources we have here at Holy Rosary to grow in our faith: prayer groups, Bible studies, small faith-sharing groups,

retreats, talks and workshops, etc. The important thing is that we recognize that our need to continue to learn about and grow in our Catholic faith never stops!

