

RECTOR'S LETTER

May 23, 2021
A Time to Act

Dear Friends in Christ:

Anh chị em thân mến trong Chúa Kitô:

Estimados Amigos y Amigas en Cristo:

"I have come to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled!" (Lk 12:49)

Before one of the Masses last Sunday, one of the adult altar servers was trying to make sure everything was organized for the procession before realizing that we were missing a candle. As she rushed to find one, I joked that we could just set her hair on fire and let her walk as a burning torch.

This may sound twisted in humor, but all joking aside, I could not help but think of the many images of Pentecost in art where we see the tongues of flame resting upon or hovering right above the heads of the apostles, as if their heads had indeed been set on fire, turning them into human torches.

And is this not the entire point? Fire has been a powerful symbol of the season of Easter, going back to the Easter Vigil itself. At the Vigil, everything begins in the darkness of death—the darkness of the tomb. Then a new primal light breaks forth—the light of the Easter fire (which we unfortunately had to abrogate this year from our celebration due to the pandemic guidelines). From the fire is lit the newly blessed Paschal Candle, the pillar of light representing the light of the Risen Christ, bringing about a new dawn of creation. In a normal year, that Paschal Candle is used to light the individual candles that spread out throughout the congregation. The altar candles are later lit from the same light. That same Paschal Candle is later plunged into the water of the baptismal font, unsealing the womb of the Church from which the newly baptized will emerge reborn. The newly baptized receive lit candles from the same Paschal Candle, being reminded

to "receive the light of Christ" and to keep the light burning brightly. This last ritual also takes place at the baptism of children.

In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Christian faithful are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Church prays for the bestowing of the gifts of that same Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord. Those who are confirmed are sent forth to proclaim the Gospel and build the Kingdom of God, not just through their words, but through faithful witness of life—a brightly shining life of holiness.

As we celebrate the conclusion to the Easter season with this great Solemnity of Pentecost, may we draw inspiration from the beautiful depiction of the oculus (top of the dome) of our Co-Cathedral pictured here, which beautifully shows the Holy Spirit descending with tongues of fire upon our heads, reminding us that we have been sealed by God and set ablaze with the fire of His love—we have become human torches to light up the world.

The Church is born at Pentecost as the Spirit is sent to the disciples gathered together in prayer with the Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who is always at the heart of the activity of the Church. In this month of May, traditionally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, may we recognize the gift with which we have been sealed and go forth to cast the fire of love upon the earth.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, we place all our trust in You. Amen.

Yours in Christ,

Very Rev. Jeffrey L. Bame

Very Reverend Jeffrey L. Bame
Rector & Parish Administrator

