

I love Pentecost. I love that we celebrate today not only the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church for almost two thousand years but specifically today we celebrate the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of our faith community for the last 100 years. It is not only a day to celebrate the birth of the Church, but it is also a time to celebrate the presence of God's Spirit active in the Church today.

I love the diversity of our Catholic Church. We are truly Catholic, which is to say we are universal, we embrace all peoples. This pluralism is reflective of the first Pentecost when people from all around the world heard the apostles speaking of the mighty acts of God in their own languages. Here in our own faith community the church has a rich diversity. We are Hispanic Catholics, European Catholics, Black Catholics, Asian Catholics, and African Catholics. There are often among us Catholics who are Irish Travelers and you good Southern Catholics have even been so kind as to graciously welcome those of us who are Yankee Catholics.

I rejoice today as I see the Holy Spirit active in our midst. The exciting thing for me as pastor of this faith community is that more and more of you are taking the gospel seriously; you are living gospel values; you are opening your hearts to God's Holy Spirit and when that happens, the church begins to come alive with new life. There are hundreds of you who have yielded to the Holy Spirit and have a sense of mission. Some are talented teachers and catechists, some are musically talented, some visit the homebound and the sick, some welcome inquirers, some work with our young people through scouting, sports or youth ministries, some reach out to those in need through the ministries of Catholic Social Services and the Master's Table, many, many of you serve in a liturgical position. I could go on and on. But all of you who are involved in these ministries make up the heart of the parish because we are all united by the Holy Spirit. And on this Pentecost it is good to rejoice in the activity of the Holy Spirit in our midst.

It is good to rejoice that in a few moments the Holy Spirit will breathe once again upon bread and wine to make them the Body and Blood of our Savior. This is at the very heart of who we are as a Catholic Faith Community: that our God did not abandon us, but continues to give Himself for love of us every time we gather around the altar. He gives Himself in love so that we too might give ourselves in love. As I prepare to leave go of my spiritual fatherhood of this parish, my one simple request is that you remember who you are, or more precisely whose you are. In Baptism and Confirmation all of you have received the Holy Spirit. All of us belong to God.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit God has given us a mission: to care for those around us as God cares for us, to make wherever we may find ourselves a better place, to share God's love in word and deed that others may know they are not alone and, indeed, are loved. On this my final Pentecost as your pastor I ask you to surrender to the Holy Spirit's urgings. Be men and women of pray; take time to reflect on your own spiritual journey and how God is present in your life today. Rejoice in his love for you. Rejoice that he stands with you in good times and bad. Rejoice that his Spirit continues to breathe on this Faith Community. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice!!! So, that together we can build up God's Kingdom here and now, so that together we can proclaim the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen!