

June 2, 2019

From Fr. Jim . . .

Please remember that next week is the great Feast of Pentecost. As a parish that speaks different languages and celebrates a diversity of gifts and has our unity in the one God, I look upon this Feast as kind of a parish feast day for St. Leo. If we were not named after St. Leo the Great, we could easily have taken the name of the Church of Pentecost or the Church of the Holy Spirit. Actually, any parish could have these names. Maybe the Feast of Pentecost is the Patronal Feast for the universal church throughout the world.

Particularly here at St. Leo, doesn't the description of the Pentecost event in the Acts of the Apostles remind you of our weekend liturgies? Isn't the Spirit so evident in the unity that is among the diversity of people, gifts and languages that we are so blessed to share? Our diversity is more a blessing than it is a barrier to us being church together. This, too, is due to the presence of the Spirit who is always by our side to show us the way, to teach us how to love God and one another, to help us love others as God loves us and to accept, tolerate, forgive, bear with, console and heal one another in the name of the Lord. This defines our unity in the midst of all of our diversity. We especially give thanks to God for the unity we know in receiving and in doing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

But as much as we are blessed and as much as we have grown and are growing in the love of God and the life of the Spirit, we must stay hungry for the ways of God and dependent on the Holy Spirit always for further growth. We must be aware of the barriers that still exist that can separate us or get in the way of the call to unity that God wants for us. Not being able to speak a common language well for all of us leads to normal and natural misunderstandings and hurt feelings and trusting each other when it looks like and feels like it is time to stand ground and fight, or appreciating other ways of doing things or that there is more than one right way or that any one culture is not the only way or always the best way, continue to challenge our patience, compassion and perseverance with one another. We must always lean on the Spirit for these challenges. The Spirit is the only one who can help us and who will give us attitudinal adjustments when needed. Come, Holy Spirit, Come! Fill the hearts of your faithful. Enkindle in us your fire. Recreate with us and renew the face of the earth.

Today is the Feast of the Ascension. Years ago, now, the Bishops of the United States gave permission to move this Feast from Thursday to the Sunday before Pentecost. It takes the place of the Seventh Sunday of Easter. The Readings and Prayers used for this weekend are from the Mass for the Feast of the Ascension. Where the Lord has gone, we hope to follow. With the grace and virtues of the Holy Spirit, may we all live now for then.

