

# From the Desk of Father Jeff



## Happy Pentecost!

Pentecost Sunday, celebrated 50 days after Easter, is a central feast in the Catholic Church, often called the "Birthday of the Church." It commemorates the momentous event described in the Acts of the Apostles (Chapter 2), when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and Mary in the Upper Room in Jerusalem.

Before this, the Apostles were fearful and uncertain after Jesus' Ascension. But on Pentecost, a sound like a mighty wind filled the house, and "tongues as of fire" appeared and rested on each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in various languages, enabling them to be understood by the diverse crowds gathered in Jerusalem for the Jewish Feast of Weeks (Shavuot).

This outpouring of the Holy Spirit empowered the Apostles, particularly Peter, who then boldly preached the Good News of Jesus Christ to the multitude. Thousands were converted and baptized that day, marking the official beginning of the Church's mission to spread the Gospel to all nations.

In Catholic tradition, Pentecost signifies the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to send an "Advocate" to guide and strengthen his followers. The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, and Pentecost reveals the Holy Trinity fully.

Catholics celebrate Pentecost Sunday with great joy. Priests and Deacons wear red vestments, symbolizing the fiery tongues of the Holy Spirit and God's burning love. This feast reminds believers of the Holy Spirit's ongoing presence and power within the Church and in individual lives, inspiring them to live out their faith and share the message of Christ with courage and zeal.

At St. Catherine Labouré Parish, we celebrate Pentecost in a unique way, which is inspired by the annual tradition in Rome at the Basilica of St. Mary and the Martyrs (the Pantheon) where rose petals fall from the ceiling symbolizing the descent of the Holy Spirit. Thousands gather in Rome every year at Pentecost waiting to be a part of this amazing experience.

I always hoped that if I ever was assigned to a church that had any possibility of imitating this unique, powerful, beautiful and spiritual experience, then I would. Thankfully, God helped make this happen!

Each of the 12,000 rose petals that will be falling from the ceiling over the sanctuary during the 10am Mass this weekend is for each and every one of the 12,000 registered parishioners of St. Catherine Labouré Parish. I pray in thanksgiving for each and every one of you and for the many ways that the Holy Spirit is so clearly working in our thriving parish. May we continue to live out God's mission entrusted to us by listening to the Holy Spirit leading us to living out the fruits of the Spirit as emphasized in St. Paul's letter in the 5th chapter of Galatians: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." Let us join together to continue to build a thriving parish community as we inspire others to center their lives around the fruits of the Spirit!

## Corpus Christi Sunday on June 22nd

Mark your calendar for our next big liturgical celebration! Following the 12:00 PM Mass on June 22nd, we will celebrate our annual Corpus Christi Procession at St. Louise Church. The Eucharistic procession on Corpus Christi Sunday holds profound importance in the Catholic Church, serving as a powerful public affirmation of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Firstly, it is a *public witness of faith*. In a world that often relegates religion to the private sphere, carrying the Blessed Sacrament (the consecrated Host) in the monstrance (the sacred vessel that holds the Host) through the streets boldly declares the Catholic belief that Jesus is truly, substantially, and sacramentally present under the appearances of bread and wine. This declaration is a visible testament to God's presence among His people and a direct invitation for others to encounter Him.

Secondly, it is an act of *adoration and worship*. The procession extends the worship of Christ from the Mass into the public square. As the faithful accompany the monstrance they sing hymns, recite prayers, and offer their reverence to Jesus, our Eucharistic King. This communal act deepens devotion and strengthens personal faith in the mystery of the Eucharist.

Finally, it symbolizes the *Church's pilgrimage through the world*. Just as Jesus walked with His disciples, the procession signifies that Christ continues to journey with His Church, offering strength and nourishment for our earthly pilgrimage towards heaven. It brings the presence of Christ into the community, blessing the streets and homes along the route and reminding everyone of His enduring love and saving power.

## Blessing of Automobiles July 25th

St. Christopher is widely revered as the patron saint of travelers, a tradition stemming from a popular legend. According to this legend, Christopher (whose name means "Christ-bearer") was a large man who dedicated his life to helping people cross a dangerous river. One day, a small child asked to be carried across the river, but as Christopher waded through the water, the child grew incredibly heavy, as if Christopher carried the weight of the entire world. Upon reaching the other side, the child revealed himself to be Jesus, explaining that Christopher had indeed carried the "Christ who carries the whole world."

This legend, though not historically verifiable, cemented St. Christopher's association with safe passage and protection on journeys. For centuries, people have invoked his intercession, wearing St. Christopher medals or placing his image in vehicles as a symbol of protection and a reminder to travel safely and with faith.

We are offering a blessing of vehicles on July 25th at St. Louise Church Parking lot. More details will follow in future bulletins!