

NOTRE DAME PARISH

Pentecost Sunday

"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit."



Fire and wind are signs of the Holy Spirit in the well-known Pentecost texts. Perhaps they are particularly appropriate symbols of the work of the Holy Spirit in our time. As we wait in the wreckage of what was, as we wait for the birth of what will be, we are called to see visions and dream dreams.

What of our old lives,

personally and communally, needs to be burned away? What needs to be renewed?

This is no doubt a disconcerting time, but we as Church have been here before. That same Holy Spirit who descended upon Mary and the disciples will descend upon us.

SAINT OF THE WEEK

Saint Boniface
Apostle to Germany
Bishop & Martyr
June 5

It is interesting that two saints associated with particular countries were not native. Saint Patrick, the apostle to Ireland (fifth century), was a Roman raised in England. Saint Boniface, the apostle to Germany (eighth century), was also from England.

Boniface was a Benedictine monk sent by Pope Gregory II to restore the Germanic Church to its fidelity to Rome and to evangelize the pagan tribes.

Boniface bears out the Christian rule: To follow Christ is to follow the way of the cross. For Boniface, it was not only physical suffering or death, but the painful, thankless, bewildering task of Church reform. Missionary glory is often thought of in terms of bringing new persons to Christ. It seems – but it is not – less glorious to heal the household of the faith.

Oremus – Let Us Pray

- For the eternal rest of parishioner and former Notre Dame School principal Dorothea "Teddy" Liddell
- For the diverse victims of COVID-19: the deceased, the sick, families, caregivers, the unemployed, the hungry, essential workers, business owners, and the vulnerable poor
- For those who are kept away from their loved one's final hours
- For the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth wounded by exploitation and greed
- For the safety of astronauts and those exploring a future world
- For the renewal of civility and patriotism

Returning to church step by step

As you know, some churches in Michigan City have recently been re-opening, applying the strict standards of repeated sanitizing, social distancing, and limited attendance. They have employed such techniques as inviting particular parishioners and asking others to make reservations on line.

I certainly support their efforts. And I thank those who have been making suggestions for recommencing Mass here at Notre Dame – e.g., outdoor Masses, parking lot mass, etc. Every suggestion has its drawbacks. Many are eager to return; many others have made it clear to me that they will not be returning to worship any time soon.

Because we have so many parishioners vulnerable by age

or health, I have not been quick to restart services.

A somewhat unique challenge to re-opening our parish is our proximity to Long Beach and the many visitors we entertain every summer. During this pandemic, many visitors from Chicago and Michigan have been moving back and forth among us and, no doubt will continue to do so on the Fourth of July and throughout the summer.

In this column next week I will announce our plans for re-opening in mid-June, and the requirements that worshippers must meet.

In the meantime, be prudent, safe, and faithful!

Father Keith & Rocco



“God loves you. Never doubt this, whatever may happen to you in life. At every moment, you are infinitely loved.”

--Pope Francis

PARISH GIVING DURING THE PANDEMIC: A CARA REPORT

The CARA Catholic Poll (CCP) estimates that, overall, 45% of self-identified Catholics in the United States reside in a household that regularly gives to their parish weekly offertory collection. However, this varies by frequency of Mass attendance. Among weekly attenders 92% regularly give. Among those attending less than weekly, but at least once a month, 78% give regularly. Only 20% of those attending Mass a few times a year or less give regularly.

So what is happening now that no one is attending due to the COVID-19 pandemic? No one knows for sure. Based on what we have found in previous polls, many may still

CARA stands for the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. It is located in Georgetown, Washington, D.C

give electronically or by mail. Prior to the pandemic, 48% of self-identified Catholics said they most preferred to give in person. Others preferred to give by traditional mail, to donate online, or electronically debit payments. Data from CARA’s National Survey of Catholic Parishes revealed that about half of the responding parishes provided their parishioners with the opportunity to contribute online. Some, stuck at home may now use a method that is not their most preferred. We just can’t know how many.

The other complication is in what the stay at home orders have done to the economy. Many have lost jobs and income. Others may be uncertain about the future and are spending more conservatively. It is a certainty that giving

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Pope Francis on the Holy Spirit

There is no one major document from Pope Francis on the Holy Spirit, but the references are constant, especially in homilies and addresses to Catholic audiences.

Four closely related ideas recur in the teaching of Francis on the Holy Spirit:

- The creativity of the Spirit
- Newness of the work of the Spirit
- The need to be totally open to the Holy Spirit
- The surprises of the Holy Spirit.

Very appropriately these ideas were all expressed in the Holy Father's Pentecost homily in 2013: "Are we open to 'God's surprises? Or are we closed and fearful before the newness of the Holy Spirit?...Do we have the courage to strike out along the new paths which God's newness sets before us, or do we resist, barricaded in transient structures which have lost their capacity for openness to what is new?"

Creativity and newness belong to the character of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God. "*The Spirit of*

God hovered (was moving) over the face of the waters" (Gen 1.1).

Because the creativity of the Spirit is an infinite creativity, it is not in the character or nature of God just to repeat. What God creates, what God does, is *always new, always fresh*. This applies to everything, not just to the exercise of charisms but to the Spirit's work in the liturgy. No Mass is just a repetition of a previous Mass, no baptism just a repeat of a previous baptism.

God's surprises

Are we open to God's surprises? We like regularity. We like to know what will happen next. But God breaks into our self-regulated patterns and our routines.

"The Holy Spirit annoys us," says Francis, "because he moves us, he makes us journey, he pushes the Church to go forward." (April 16th, 2013).

"Dear brothers and sisters, we are afraid of

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God's surprises! He always surprises us! The Lord is like that." (Easter Vigil 2013).

"Our God is a God who always does new things. And he asks from us docility to this newness." (20th January 2014).

"The Spirit is what brings newness, moves situations forward, creates new spaces, brings the wisdom that Jesus promised: 'He will teach you'." (8th May 2015).

The surprises of God are wonderful! Church renewal itself is one of these surprises. When we open our hearts and our minds to God's surprises, we will soon be opening our mouths to praise the Lord.

"Docility to the Spirit gives us joy." (14th April 2016).

Unity & Diversity

Because the Lord's works are ever new, the creativity of the Holy Spirit produces ever richer diversity: "It is he (the Holy Spirit) who brings forth a rich variety of gifts, while at the same time creating a unity which is never uniformity but a multifaceted and inviting harmony." (Evangelii Gaudium 117).

While the Church in the postconciliar and ecumenical era has often emphasised that Catholic unity is never uniformity, there is something fresh in this teaching of Francis.

Maybe we have given the impression as Catholics that, while some diversity is necessary, we do not want too much! But when we start like Francis from the nature of God as Creator, then



we cannot say there can be too much diversity.

For Francis, it is the same Spirit who "alone can raise up diversity, plurality and multiplicity" who "at the same time (is) bringing about unity." (Evangelii Gaudium 131).

Recognising the diversity that the Holy Spirit creates enables Pope Francis to approach Pentecostals as fellow Christians made different through the Holy Spirit, rather than people whom we see first as "non-Catholic".

God's surprises include break-throughs in Christian reconciliation. +

The Seven Gifts

Holy Spirit we now rejoice,
Your **wisdom** helps us make our choice,
To choose the path that Jesus shows,
To see things as God sees and knows.

Holy Spirit we now delight,
Your **understanding** brings the light,
Makes easier to comprehend,
God's truth and grace, life without end.

Holy Spirit you are God's hand,
By **counsel** life is daily planned,
Help us value the gift of time,
To journey on—to heaven climb.

Holy Spirit be praised more still,
Your **fortitude** makes strong our will,
Not in ourselves or human might,
But by your strength and holy light.

Holy Spirit you enlighten,
By **knowledge** you with joy brighten,
Not facts, figures, and all the rest.
Talking with God, we know him best.

Holy Spirit, Gift from above,
Piety fills our heart with love,
You unite each family member,
We're God's children, we remember.

Holy Spirit, Temple Within,
Fear of the Lord keeps us from sin,
May our motives be always pure,
God's life and love in us endure.

Holy Spirit, how can we bless,
Thank you enough, the truth confess?
We adore you, Father and Son,
And Holy Spirit. United. One. Amen.

by Paul Berchtold

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has declined.

To understand what this means it is important to know just how much Catholics gave prior to the pandemic. For two decades Catholics have reported giving about \$10 per household per week. Our most recent measure puts this figure at an average of \$9.43 per household per week.

As of January 2020, there were 329.1 million residents in the United States. Among adults in 2019, Gallup estimated that 22% self-identify as Catholic. Extrapolating that to the total Catholic population we can assume there are 72.4 million self-identified Catholics in the United States. With an average household size in the U.S. of 2.52 we can estimate there are approximately 28,734,015 Catholic households. Using CARA's survey data we know that 45% of these include an individual making a household donation to a parish that averages \$9.43 per week.

Calculating all of that out we can estimate that Catholic parishes nationally collect \$121.9 million per week. Over 52 weeks this results in an annual estimate of giving of \$6.340 billion. There are 16,914 parishes in the U.S. so that results in a budget line for average annual giving per parish of \$374,867. On an annual basis that is \$7,209 per week for the typical parish. This nearly matches responses to a recent CARA national survey where the median total for weekly collections reported by pastors was \$7,625.

The first Sunday affected by lockdowns was March 22. As of this upcoming Sunday that will account for six weeks of affected giving. If the pandemic had never occurred the typical parish would have collected an average of \$43,254 during those weeks. Perhaps a bit higher as it included Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday that have higher attendance than a typical week. Multiplying out nationally that would have been \$731,596,763 for the Catholic Church in the United States as a whole for this period of the year.

Clearly some are still giving. Again, using CARA's survey data, we know 48% of those who regularly contribute prefer to give in person. Let's assume none of those people have sought out a new way to donate. That leaves 52% of households still able to give. Yet many have lost jobs. Estimates currently place potential unemployment rates at 13%. Others may still be working but have lost income. It is possible this is being offset by others

with resources who know donations are down and are giving more. If we assume that 20% of the 52% who donate by mail or electronically can no longer do so because they have lost jobs and/or income then the number of households who might still be giving would be 5,379,008 (or 318 per parish, on average, compared to 765 in normal times). In many ways this is still a very optimistic estimate as it is also likely some of those with unaffected incomes and employment may still be acting more conservatively given economic uncertainties – even with stimulus money adding a temporary boost.

Multiplying out again that means the typical parish may be receiving \$2,999 in giving per week in this very optimistic scenario. Across six weeks that totals \$17,994. That is \$25,260 less than they would have expected had the pandemic not occurred. That means collections may only be about 42% of what they would have been without a pandemic.

These estimates likely still paint far too rosy of a portrait. Some may not be giving because they assume their parish is closed and doesn't need the money. But the typical parish must still maintain the facility, pay bills, and likely wishes to pay staff for as long as possible. In normal times a parish with difficulties may need to rely on a diocesan subsidy. But giving to annual appeals, depending on their timing, may also be affected by the conditions created by the pandemic.

CARA research [estimates](#) that there are 5.8 paid ministry staff persons per parish that means there are about 98,101 of these employees nationally (Note that this total includes some double counting of individuals as some clergy and lay people are on paid staffs in more than one parish). We've previously covered how much these employees are paid in another [post](#). It is the case that Catholic institutions have been able to [receive](#) some loans from the Small Business Administration-administered Paycheck Protection Program. This may help fill the gap in lost giving due to stay at home orders.

CARA is currently fielding multiple surveys about how the Church and its members are affected by and dealing with the pandemic. Stay tuned for more soon...

CHILDREN'S COLORING PAGE: The Holy Spirit descended upon Mary and the apostles in tongues of fire.

