

Praying for the Spirit

A novena is nine consecutive days of prayer for a particular need or intention. The original novena was the fulfillment of Jesus' command to the Apostles at his Ascension to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit, who came ten days later at Pentecost. The Novena to the Holy Spirit begins on the traditional date of the Ascension, the Thursday of the sixth week of Easter. The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Most Holy Trinity, is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise of both an Advocate before the Father and the empowering of the Church to continue His mission until the end of time.

Baptism comes after one believes in the heart and professes with the lips that Jesus is Lord. The sacrament of Baptism incorporates the individual into Jesus' death (with the promise of sharing in the Resurrection) and into His mystical body, the Church. But Baptism is only a partial initiation; Jesus demanded much more than a simple profession of faith by the Apostles and disciples and demands no less from us.

Pope Francis has been consistently reminding us that ours is a missionary faith. The call to share the Good News with others is not reserved only to clergy and religious; rather, it is a universal call to every Christian. Each Christian will live this out slightly differently, but live it out we must. It is not optional. Nor is it easy. This is where the sacrament of Confirmation comes in. Confirmation completes an individual's incorporation into the Church. In Confirmation, we receive the Holy Spirit, just as the Apostles and disciples did on Pentecost. And like them, we are commissioned to go out and share Jesus with the world. All Confirmed Christians are apostles (with a small "a"): all are "sent forth," which is the root of the word apostle.


Any true apostle regularly needs refreshment and nourishment. Jesus provided for that too: the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the Church gathers as the Lord's community to hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd in the Scriptures and receive His Body and Blood from the altar. This is not primarily for the sake of the individual or even the community; rather it is for the sake of fulfilling the mission.

As we prepare for Pentecost, I invite everyone to pray for the rekindling of the Holy Spirit in her or his life, as well as within the whole parish. There are many prepared novenas available on the Internet. You can also do your own by setting aside time each day from this upcoming Thursday until Pentecost, praying for and to the Holy Spirit in your own way. Come, Holy Spirit!

PS – I am away this weekend at the Ordination of an Eastern Province Dominican who was a Ph.D. student when I was at the other university on the peninsula.



Fr. Carl Schlichte, O.P.



The 8:00 am Mass on Saturday, June 10 will be celebrated by Fr. Luke Hoyt, OP.

Although Fr. Luke is a member of the Eastern Dominican Province, his parents were married at St. Mary Magdalen, and he was baptized here. It will be a "First Mass of Thanksgiving" for Fr. Luke, who was ordained yesterday (May 20th) in Washington, D.C.

Fr. Carl happened to attend Fr. Luke's ordination, because (as he mentions in his postscript) one of the other ordinands was a student at Stanford when he served there.

Fr. Carl will spend next year travelling around the world (in almost 80 days), taking an extended retreat in a Trappist monastery in New England, and studying in Rome and Oxford! We can all follow his adventures on his new blog: cschlichte17sabbatical18.blogspot.com