

ST. JOSEPH PARISH AND SCHOOL – SEPTEMBER 17, 2017

Dear Families and Parishioners,

Friday St. Joseph School celebrated our first student Mass of their school year. Most schools including catholic universities begin with the Mass of the Holy Spirit. These opening Masses truly are a challenge. How does one explain the action of the Holy Spirit?

Jesus described the Spirit as a wind. We do not know where it comes from or where it goes but one feels it. However, the Holy Spirit is far more than a wind. The Holy Spirit is a person, indeed, the 3rd person of the Trinity. It is most difficult for humans to visualize the invisible and immaterial. We live by sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Sight, however, is by far our most important sense. So we have pictures of God the Father, pictures of Jesus, but what kind of picture can we draw for the Holy Spirit? It is sometimes called a Tongue of Fire, a Dove, and the Wind.

Fortunately, God transcends our five senses by entering directly into our mind and heart. The Holy Spirit prompts us with good thoughts and ways of helping others. In the Mass of the Holy Spirit we try to bring the notion of the Holy Spirit and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to the children. You mothers and fathers are truly challenged as you bring the notion of God to your children. Without you leading the way with your children, our work would be useless.

Marriage and Good Intentions

Men and women do not enter marriage lightly. Almost universally they marry with great hopes of happiness and companionship. I also know that so many who have left the Catholic Church have departed because their first marriage collapsed and they enter a second marriage. Pope Francis has said most explicitly that such situations do not remove the person from the Church. However, the recovery is not always easy. The circumstances of each broken marriage are different. Pope Francis has encouraged the priests to deal with people of broken marriages and to discover with them where God is still in their life. God does not abandon and neither should the priest. I encourage the parishioners to invite those who have left the active Church because of marriage to return. I am happy to talk with any of them and assist them in a full return.

First Confession, First Communion, the Sacrament of Adult Confirmation

Sacraments are not an automatic check-off list. Children in second grade at St. Joseph School go through Sacramental preparation for Confession and Communion. Those parents who have children not attending our school and wish these Sacraments will need to identify themselves to me to see if there is a way we can instruct them.

Bishop Murry has announced the Sacrament of Confirmation for adults for Sunday, November 19th, 2017. If you have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit, please let me know. There will be some short instruction and I will personally accompany the Confirmandi to St. Columba Cathedral on Sunday, November 19th. My statement regarding the Holy Spirit above should indicate to you why this Sacrament is of importance. God works through His Sacraments.

Fr. Tom Acker, S.J.
September 17, 2017