

## FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

We are swiftly moving toward the great Feast of Pentecost. Pentecost is celebrated fifty days after Easter, the day the Holy Spirit descended upon the Disciples in the Upper Room. This is the birthday of the Church – when the power of the Holy Spirit now enlivened these frightened Disciples of Jesus, to go out and proclaim Jesus' Resurrection.

This is a big day for us. Without the Holy Spirit, we would have no connection to the saving death of Jesus, and so would not be able to enter into Heaven. Without the Holy Spirit, all of the Sacraments would merely be external rituals, and would not be the conduit of the *great graces* God so desperately wants to pour upon the world today. Without the Holy Spirit, our prayer would be words spoken to ourselves, and we would be able to have no connection to Almighty God. Without the Holy Spirit, God would be far away.

But He sent His Holy Spirit to us. Now we can be connected to the Living and True God. Jesus Ascended into Heaven (this last Thursday's Feast) in order to pour out His Spirit upon us. The Disciples were in the Upper Room for nine days praying (the very first "Novena"), preparing for this blessed day. The Blessed Virgin Mary was there as well. She who was (and still is) the spouse of the Holy Spirit was in that Upper Room helping to form the Disciples of Jesus, preparing them to receive the Holy Spirit – the very One she had received in a tremendous outpouring when she cried out her great "*Fiat*," "Let it be done to me" (Luke 1:38).

Mary can help us as well. She can help to form us to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Let us take this next week to prepare ourselves, with Mary, to receive all the many gifts that God wants to give us!