

**From the Desk of Father Ed:**

Dear Parishioners,

This past week I had the privilege of being on pilgrimage with 25 people, mostly from our parish. We visited the holy sites of Lourdes, France and Fatima, Portugal, both of which are the most popular Church approved Marian apparitions. Everywhere you travel throughout these shrines there are people praying. In the evening there are thousands in candlelight processions singing and praising God and honoring our Blessed Mother. They are truly places where the Blessed Mother's presence is closely felt and places where heartfelt prayer comes more easily. On numerous occasions I found myself in one of the churches at these shrines praying, lighting candles for our parish, and especially praying for those parishioners who are suffering.

After returning from our pilgrimage and meeting with our parishioners after Mass this past weekend I was delighted to hear from so many of our people that they were praying for us while we were at these holy sites in France and Portugal. They were praying that we receive many graces and for our health, safety, and return home. It is always a great joy to hear and discover that someone is praying for you; that someone took the time and effort to ask God or our Blessed Mother to help or protect you. Prayer is an act of charity and love and our God delights in it.

In our Gospel this weekend we arrive at the 17th chapter in John's Gospel, which is known as Jesus' High Priestly Prayer where He is praying to the Father. In His prayer to the Father, Jesus is praying directly for His Apostles that they be protected and consecrated, that is, set apart by God to continue in His mission. Jesus prayed that they may be one as He and the Father are one. In this same chapter of John's Gospel Jesus prayed for all those who come to believe through the Apostles' teaching, that is, namely us. Jesus prayed for us because He loves us and cares for us.

As we approach the end of our Easter Season and begin the 9-day Novena to the Holy Spirit (the day after Ascension Thursday; the day Jesus returned to the Father in Heaven) we are invited to join in prayer with our Blessed Mother, Mary and the Apostles as they waited for Pentecost Sunday - the beginning of the Church, that is, the day the Holy Spirit came upon them. Let us pray together, "Come Holy Spirit, Lover of our souls, come upon us in a new and powerful way to strengthen us in faith, hope, and love."

Our Lady Queen of Peace, pray for us,

Father Ed,

Pastor