

A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

January 19, 2020

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

The interaction between Jesus and John the Baptist in this week's Gospel offers us an insight into the ways of the spiritual life that are hidden yet powerful. "On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (John 1:34)." The Sacrament of Baptism is the gateway into the Christian life. The Catholic Church teaches that Baptism makes us children of God, members of Christ, members of the Church and heirs to the kingdom of heaven. The Catholic Church also recognizes the special graces of God that are available in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Baptism in the Holy Spirit involves receiving the outpouring of the Spirit, being opened to a deeper experience of God. Often referred to as a "personal Pentecost," this personal experience of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit brings alive the graces of our Baptism in new ways. The Holy Spirit not only sets on fire all that we have already received, but comes again in power to equip us with his gifts for service and mission. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not a Sacrament or a substitute for the Sacraments. When filled with the Holy Spirit, many notice a real change in their faith lives. They have a true love for Jesus, a strong desire to learn more about Him and do His will by serving others. In other words, they want to share Jesus with everyone. Other common effects include a desire for deeper prayer, an enlivening of Scripture and a greater appreciation of the Mass and the Sacraments. "Baptism in the Spirit is not a human intervention, it is a divine intervention. It is a renewal of baptism and of the whole of Christian life, of all the sacraments." (Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, September 2003). All Catholics are invited to embrace our faith at a deeper level through the assistance of the Holy Spirit. How do I receive this powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit in my life? In our region of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis there is usually a yearly offering of a "Life in the Spirit Seminar," where interested Catholics learn more about the person and works of the Holy Spirit as well as deepening



their love for God. At the end of this seminar is usually an opportunity for participants to receive the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you read this article and sense a desire rising in your heart for a deepened encounter with the

Holy Spirit, please let me know and we can visit more about the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit in a more profound way.

Winter Schedule Changes

Winter brings many blessings as well as some opportunities to be challenged, stretched and grow. With the season of cold, snow and ice upon us, some in our area push on with regular activities embracing their identity as tough Minnesotans. Others in our communities travel south to experience a little warmth with their sun. Some of our very generous volunteers go south for the winter as well. Some adjustments that go with this truth is that starting in January the Saturday 5 pm Mass at Most Holy Redeemer will offer Holy Communion under the form of Consecrated Hosts only and not offer the Precious Blood. During the weekday Masses for February 4-7 Fr. George will be on vacation and I will be on retreat, therefore, there will not be daily Mass or Communion Service at St. Patrick or Most Holy Redeemer that week. Area priests will be available for emergency situations or funerals. I am not comfortable having a scheduled Communion Service held in a church unless it is conducted by an ordained Deacon, so as not to weaken the importance of the celebration of the Holy Mass and the connection of the Eucharist with the Altar and an ordained bishop, priest or deacon. There are daily Mass options each of those February days in Faribault, Lonsdale, New Prague and Le Center for those who desire to attend the Holy Mass. Thank you for your understanding in these matters.

God bless you!

Fr. Tom Niehaus