COME, HOLY SPIRIT!

A Prayer to the Holy Spirit

RENEWING THE GRACE OF CONFIRMATION

Most Holy Spirit of God,
Third Person of the Blessed Trinity,
there was a day when by your infinite mercy,
a bishop called me by name and said:
“I anoint you with the sign of the cross;
and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation;
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

On that blessed day,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
of counsel and fortitude,
of knowledge and piety,
and of wholesome childlike fear of you,
was called down upon me.

On that blessed day,
when the holy oil was traced upon my brow,
my soul was sealed with the Holy Spirit,
and was marked with an indelible mark.
I was made, body and soul,
a temple of your Spirit.

Dear God, thank you
for the wonderful grace of my confirmation.
Let me never do anything
that would violate or desecrate the temple
that has been dedicated and consecrated to you.
Let me never be ashamed
of your mark of Christian love.

Let me serve you faithfully and bravely,
no matter how long the fight,
nor how intense or dangerous the journey.

Help me to realize
that as long as I walk courageously,
and stay close to Christ Jesus,
I can be certain of eternal life,
and so find that most perfect happiness
in the complete possession of God’s love
forever and ever in heaven.
Amen! Alleluia!

Adapted from a Prayer to the Holy Spirit in the Rural Life Prayer Book.
SPECIAL GUEST MESSAGE

An Unexpected Opportunity

BY FATHER FEDERICO LOMBARDI, SJ

Looking back at the short span of our lives, those of us who have reached a certain age can see how many things have changed completely, and how, in an ever shorter space of years, they change once again...Advertising obsessively pushes the desire for unnecessary novelty, creating a real dependency that makes the latest find and the latest product seem necessary. And so in many areas, the acceleration of change risks becoming an end in itself; a form of slavery rather than progress. It seems clear that we are moving at an unsustainable pace that sooner or later must break down, as we can already see from the very serious threats to the environment.

For their part, many active people, thoroughly integrated into the functioning of the modern world, are engaged in very intense — almost frantic — rhythms of activity. At first, they often join in with passion and enthusiasm, but they soon realize the heavy price that must be paid in terms of human and family relationships, affections, and overall balance in their personal lives.

Now this increasingly accelerated course has suffered a serious shock. Economic indicators have been upset. Our plans have been turned on their head. Meetings and trips have been canceled. For many people, the concept of time has been lost. And we have become disoriented. How do we experience this time? What is the point of it? There is a time for activity, but also time for joyful expectation; time for being together and loving each other; time for contemplating beauty, time for long sleepless nights, and time for patient suffering. There is also the possibility of wasting a great deal of time; of becoming bitter by a sense of emptiness. There is also a time for being alone with oneself.

Is there also time for being alone with God? When we are bursting with life, the idea of being alone with God pushes us to the margins of existence. We find countless things to do first, things that seem pleasant or even urgent, so time spent with the Lord is so often postponed. For many people, this strange time of having to stay home because of the pandemic also has been a time to rediscover prayer. We might wonder whether the inability to attend church will adversely affect our faith and spiritual lives. Or on the other hand, this might be a time to learn to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, in every place, even in our homes...

The time for the Lord might seem marginal in the day, but in reality, it is the time from which a source can emerge for meaning and order in our lives in the light of the Gospel. What has been good in our day? With what spirit have we lived our relationships with those entrusted to me? We have all heard about an examination of conscience whereby we place ourselves before God and thus put our lives in order. But we often forget this. Is not the pandemic, which has altered the rhythm of our lives, an unexpected opportunity to reorder them so that we can find purpose and meaning, not just for ourselves but for the whole human family?

Father Federico Lombardi writes for the Vatican News Service. Learn more: news.va!
In his apocalyptic novel, *Father Elijah*, Michael D. O’Brien writes: “The loss of even one soul is catastrophic.” Sit with this sentence for a few moments. Pray with it. Think on it. Think about the catastrophic loss of 100,000 souls to the coronavirus. Think about those who die alone, grieve alone, and suffer alone. Think about families devastated by fear, grief, hunger, and financial ruin. My generation may have lived through 9-11, seemingly endless wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and even the Great Recession, but nothing we have experienced prepares us for this crisis. And so far at least, the way forward seems fraught with difficulty, hardship, and even more suffering.

As I shared with you last week, Cardinal Sean O’Malley has asked every parish and collaborative to draft an individual plan to slowly and safely re-open our churches for moments of public prayer and worship. The archdiocesan guidelines are clear and strict. They limit the overall capacity of every church, require conscientious social distancing, and impose rigorous cleaning and safety practices. None of our churches can open for public worship until our local plan is reviewed and approved by our regional bishop.

Since last week, I have met twice with a working group comprised of fellow parishioners and pastoral team members who worship at both Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of Good Voyage Parish. I am grateful to Becky Carrancho, Robert Krause, and Rosa Ladd, along with Betsy, Cliff, Jane, Lucy, and Tom for their willingness to serve on this important committee. During our first meeting, we agreed that however much we long for the public celebration of Holy Mass, we cannot ignore three vitally important concerns:

- Our responsibility for the health and safety of all parishioners.
- Our responsibility to be good neighbors to the broader community.
- Our responsibility to communicate honestly about the risk of public worship.

Our working group is also mindful of the unique character of our parishes during the summer months. While many parishes slow down during the summer season, our parishes typically see a substantial increase in the number of people who worship with us. This blessing creates real challenges regarding how we can effectively communicate our limited re-opening plans to both short-term and long-term summer visitors.

Another serious challenge is church capacity. Archdiocesan and state government regulations strictly limit seating to 40% of overall capacity in each of our church buildings. At the same time, these regulations also require at least six feet of social distancing at all times. This latter requirement will make it impossible for us to accommodate everyone who wishes to join us for Mass. In order to comply with the social distancing requirement, we can seat safely only 28 parishioners in Saint

*Continued on the next page.*
FATHER JIM’S MESSAGE
CONTINUED

Joachim Church, 28 parishioners in Saint Anthony Chapel, 36 parishioners in Our Lady of Good Voyage Church, and 56 parishioners in Saint Ann Church. Needless to say, this is a difficult and heartbreaking reality for a faith community that made All Are Welcome! a central component of its mission and vision.

In addition, each of our churches must be cleaned from top to bottom after each and every public liturgical celebration — after every funeral service, wedding ceremony, and celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This includes bathrooms, entrances, sacristies, worship spaces, and any surface that someone might touch. Signage must be printed and posted both inside and outside of every church, too. As you might imagine, the costs and logistics associated with these requirements demand proper planning, scheduling, and the purchase of additional supplies.

Other important factors worth noting are that the new safety measures will change the ways we enter and exit our churches; where we sit; how we reach those seats; how we worship; and how we receive Holy Communion. Several parishioners have already been recruited to serve as ushers, but we must all do our part to help ensure each other’s health and safety. In accordance with archdiocesan guidelines and for the foreseeable future, everyone who enters our churches will be required to wear a mask; maintain a safe social distance at all times; and receive Holy Communion in the hands. Missalettes must be removed from all churches. And last but not least, all of our music programs will be discontinued until the pandemic is over.

My hope is that we will be ready for a limited re-opening sometime in July. Until we can make all necessary preparations to protect our parishioners, pastoral team members, and volunteers, our churches and parish office will remain closed. I fully appreciate that other churches may open more quickly and that some parishioners here will be disappointed with this decision. It is not my place to second guess the decisions and practices of other pastors and parishes. My singular focus can only be on how Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of Good Voyage Parish respond to this crisis and how we can do whatever is possible with limited resources to keep each other safe and well.

As we celebrate the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, let us pray that our decisions will be guided by faith, fortitude, good counsel, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, and wonder at God’s presence in our lives. Let us also pray for the gifts of patience and perseverance in prayer. And let us continue to pray for each other, for our divided country, and for our suffering world. Please also pray for me and for our pastoral team. Be assured of our daily prayers for you and your family during this time of trial. Peace and blessings to all! Come, Holy Spirit!

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PENTECOST SUNDAY

OUR WEEKLY GIFTS

The Importance of Generous Giving

As always, your weekly gifts are vitally important to the financial stability of both Holy Family Parish and Our Lady of Good Voyage Parish. Our parishes depend solely on the generosity of our fellow parishioners to pay bills, make ends meet, and help to ensure both the short-term and long-term financial stability of our parishes.

All friends, neighbors, and fellow parishioners of the Catholic Community of Gloucester & Rockport are encouraged to mail their offering or to give electronically. Our mailing address is 74 Prospect Street, Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930. In addition, our We Share program is a safe and easy way to make donations to your home parish using a credit card, debit card, or electronic check.

Put simply, we need your help now more than ever! For more information about how to support our parishes during these difficult days, please feel free to contact me at frjim@ccgronline.com or 978-281-4820. Thank you for your generous support! May God bless you and your family! Peace and blessings to all! — Father Jim

SANCTUARY GIFTS

At each of our churches in the Catholic Community of Gloucester & Rockport, sanctuary flowers, sanctuary candles, and sanctuary gifts (hosts & wine) can be donated for a special intention or in memory of a friend or loved one. The requested donation for sanctuary gifts is $175. The requested donation for a sanctuary candle is $25. This week, donations were offered for these intentions:

- In Memory of Chris Wheeler
  Sanctuary Candle · Saint Ann Church

- In Memory of James B. King
  Sanctuary Candle · Saint Joachim Church

- In Memory of Martin Dillon
  Sanctuary Candle · Saint Anthony Chapel

- In Memory of Joseph Neves
  Sanctuary Candle · Our Lady of Good Voyage Church

If you would like to donate a sanctuary candle or sanctuary gifts in memory of a deceased loved one, please contact us at office@ccgronline.com or 978-281-4820. Thank you for your generous support! May God bless you!

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