

Pentecost offers renewing spirit of ever-faithful God

By Father Robert J. Kennedy
Guest columnist

What is arguably the richest set of readings in the Lectionary may also be the least heard: the readings for the Vigil of Pentecost.

Because Saturday evening Masses generally use the readings of Pentecost Sunday itself, the vigil readings are bypassed. As a conclusion to this series of articles "Cross of Glory, Life in Christ," the vigil readings provide a wonderful summary of God's saving intention and activity toward us — past, present and to come.

There are four options for the first reading of the Pentecost Vigil. The first tells the story of the tower built in Babel (Genesis 11:1-9). Clearly it is an image of the world which has fallen victim to its own arrogance. Because of the people's pride, they cannot hear or understand one another and they are scattered over the face of the earth. This divided humanity is healed in the reconciling Spirit of Pentecost, who speaks through the apostles in such a way that every ear and heart hears them in its native language (Acts 2:1-11).

The Pentecost gift of the spirit is not a



unique action of God on behalf of a beloved people, however; it is the climax of a consistent pattern of divine relationship. At the foot of Mount Sinai, the God of the covenant calls the people of Israel together and makes a dwelling among them that is, at one and the same time, terrifying and

encouraging (Exodus 19:3-8, 16-20). This divine presence in fire and cloud, smoke and trumpet blast, nourishes the people with manna and quail as they move from slavery to freedom in a land they can call home.

Yet, after a time of prosperity and power in this homeland, this: "holy nation," God's "dear" people, find themselves again in the desert of the exile, dry bones without spirit and flesh because of their unfaithfulness. But the faithful God of creation breathed vibrant spirit into these bones, opening their graves, animating the hope of Israel, giving them new life (Ezekiel 37:1-14). This gift of the life-giving spirit of God prefigures the final "Day of the Lord" when God's spirit will be poured out in a great and terrible display and will save all the faithful ones (Joel 3:1-5).

These options for the first reading of the vigil tell the double story of our fickleness and infidelity as God's people and of God's unwavering fidelity, unfailing presence, and eternal promise to bring us the fullness of life.

And this double story continues. Are we not still a divided people, lost in pride and unable or unwilling to understand one another? Are we not dried up for lack of God's animating spirit? Yet, God is faithful throughout, and until that great and terrible day of our rescue, God's own spirit groans within us and in all creation, a spirit of patient endurance and of prayer (Romans 8:22-27). This spirit is God-with-us- and-in-us, the untiring companion who props up our drooping spirits, inspires hope in the midst of discouragement, and guides our steps along God's holy way.

This spirit is the gift of the glorified Christ, the river of living water which flows from the living one to quench the thirst of parched spirits and refresh the dryness of weary hearts (John 7:37-39). This spirit, which hovered over the waters at the dawn of creation and who will overtake every alien spirit at the end of time, is renewing the face of the earth, filling the hearts of the faithful ones, and kindling in them the fire of divine love.

Come, O Holy Spirit, come!

Fiscal woes

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alcohol abuser who lived on the streets, "Henry" found a new life through Dimitri House, where he currently resides, and Rogers House Restaurant.

"It makes me more ready, more experienced," he said of his work at the restaurant, noting that "you have to go dip into yourself" to succeed in the program.

Dimitri House, meanwhile, exists virtually on a week-to-week basis, according

to its directors, Jim and Pauline Dobbertin, who hope that private donors will keep dipping into their pockets to give people like "Henry" a chance in life.

The ministry recently sponsored its second annual "Hike for the Homeless," which raised more than \$1,700 for Dimitri House. The money arrived just in time for the home, Jim Dobbertin said, because Dimitri's checking account held less than \$400 before the hike. Dimitri House draws its funding from such varied sources as lawyers in Rochester and unknown donors from California, he said, noting that "it's those \$10 and \$20 checks that make it."

St. Anne's

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member of St. Anne's parish council. Nonetheless, the resignation pleased Cantin.

"I'm greatly relieved," Cantin remarked, noting that the announcement will spare the parish "a long battle of removal."

But one parishioner who supported Monsignor Roche said he didn't think Monsignor Roche's resignation was related to the controversy over the school closing.

"I honestly don't believe that Monsignor Roche has done this in reaction to the parish council's conduct," said Charlie Lalka,

chairman of the parish's financial committee. "I hope that the parish council will take this to be an opportunity for reconciling and healing in the parish."

Monsignor Roche expressed similar statements in his announcement. "I have already invited those serving on parish council who disagree with me to enter a period of reflection, which I hope can be followed by working toward the healing of our wounds as a parish."

At a meeting with 20 parishioners seeking the pastor's removal, Cantin said such a healing process could begin now that Monsignor Roche is leaving. "Now that our primary objective is more or less taken care of," he said, "we can get into positive things."

Pilgrimage to national shrine marks Fatima anniversary

To commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the appearance of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima, a bus will be leaving Auburn Saturday, May 13, for the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Washington, D.C.. The bus will leave from the downtown Auburn Parking Garage at 6 a.m., and will re-

turn to Auburn at approximately 10:30 p.m.

Cost for the trip is \$29 per person. Meals are not included in the cost. For more information, call Debra Oster at 315/252-9072.

The ministry has to "make it," Dobbertin noted, because every month more than 300 people use its services, consisting of an emergency food cupboard, a nightly supper program and an emergency shelter. It costs \$100,000 yearly to deliver Dimitri's services, Dobbertin said. But by soliciting United Way funding and private donations and grants, the house should be able to continue operating in the black, he said, noting that 200 volunteers help to keep costs down.

Keeping down the innumerable costs of surviving on a low income likewise concerns the Corpus Christi Center, which offers primary health care, dental services, job counseling, academic tutoring and prenatal education for its 2500 clients yearly. Doctors, dentists and teachers are among the 65 volunteers who donate time at the center, which employs three full-time staff members.

Like Corpus' other ministries, the center must struggle to find funds independently of the parish's. Donna Del Santo, co-director of the center, said that she wants to plan bowl-a-thons with Catholic high schools in the future as one way of raising money for the center's \$65,000 budget. Del Santo said that United Way funding and private grants make up \$15,000 of that budget, with the rest coming from donations.

One ministry that continues to do well financially is Isaiah House. Sister Arlene Helget, the home's administrator, said that the ministry relies primarily on memorial donations and Corpus Christi parishioners to finance its programs. The home also rotates 100 volunteers, who supplement the

efforts of the home's three full-time employees in providing 24-hour care of Isaiah's two residents.

Since its opening in August, 1987, Isaiah House has cared for 31 terminally ill patients who lacked financial or family support to sustain a long-term hospital or home stay. The home continually widens its base of donors, Sister Helget said, because it represents a common concern that Corpus' other ministries don't have — the death of a loved one.

"Ministry to the dying touches everyone's lives," Sister Helget said. "Everybody experiences a death in the family." The home also draws a steady stream of volunteers because no one need be a health expert to work there, she said. "As soon as we get word out that is this is a ministry where people with no medical experience can volunteer, it just touches people," she commented.

But, like her fellow Corpus program directors, Sister Helget has decided to seek funding on a more permanent basis than the donations which she admitted can, "wax and wane," in their frequency. The home has formed a funding committee which will look at grant-writing possibilities, she said.

All the parish ministries share equally the profits made at an annual Corpus Christi fundraising dinner in October, and each ministry noted a need for more volunteers and more money. Both might be inspired by the words of another employee at Rogers House Restaurant, who is starting a new life after a jail term.

Looking about the restaurant and at his co-workers, the man remarked: "By watching these people, I get goodness."

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