

A Letter from Our Pastoral Coordinator October 28, 2018



May Christ's peace, joy and hope be with you all!

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The occasion of Bishop Daniel Mueggenborg coming to our parishes to celebrate the Eucharist with us is a great opportunity to reflect on the last "mark" of the Church. These four marks come from the Nicene Creed that we recite every Sunday. It is both a personal and a communal confession of faith. Our recitation testifies to the belief that we are in line with the message of Christ that has been witnessed down through the ages. In a sense the creed "stands like a giant arch spanning the centuries" (The Creed. Bernard Marthaler. 2004). When we say the creed as both individuals and as a community, we both praise God for all the God has done for us in creation while acknowledging before one another that God exists in the world and continues to act in it.

The last "mark" of the Church is her *apostolic* nature, already being one, holy, and catholic as I've written in earlier columns. By her nature, the Church is linked to the apostles of Jesus, and that Jesus himself sent them out to preach the Good News. It's founded on the preaching of the Good News and the testimony of that to which the apostles witnessed. Pope Francis first points out that this apostolic foundation is based firmly on Jesus. "The apostles lived with Jesus, they listened to his words, they shared his life; above all they were witnesses of his death and resurrection. Our faith...is not based on an idea; it is not based on a philosophy. It is based on Christ himself."

Second, the Catholic Catechism points out that "with the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling in her, the Church keeps and hands on the teaching, the 'good deposit,' the salutary words she has heard from the apostles"(CCC ¶857).

Obviously, this deposit includes all of the Sacred Tradition: Scripture, dogma, doctrine, sacraments, prayer, the Communion of Saints, pastoral ministry and so forth. This deposit is never an idea or even a theology – it is a person: Christ Jesus himself. Jesus, is the gift of this great tradition of the Church. The caretakers of this Tradition, of the living proclamation of the person of Christ, are the college of bishops throughout the world under the direction of the Holy Father.

Third, by her apostolic nature, the Church is a missionary apostolate. Her job, in fact all our jobs, is to share Jesus with the entire world. All of us are to go out and spread the joy of knowing Jesus by our words, our witness, and our entire life. We have to ask ourselves if we are true to this sense of missionary discipleship. We must be strong in our sense of being sent, "bearing the name of Jesus by [our] prayer, proclaiming it, and testifying to it."(The Church of Mercy. Pope Francis. P.38).

Thus, all that we do as followers of Jesus, must ideally contribute to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic nature of the Church, the Body of Christ on earth. We pray, celebrate the sacraments, believe in the Risen Jesus, and hang onto hope so that we can take Christ into the world. We must be "living stones" of the Church, active and breathing vehicles of God's grace to and for the world in which we live.

In God's great love, hope and mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deacon Jim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deacon Jim Fish, Pastoral Coordinator
Holy Rosary and Visitation parishes
Archdiocese of Seattle