

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

This Sunday we celebrate the feast of the birth of St. John the Baptist. Normally if the saint's feast day falls on Sunday, it is not observed by the church that year because Sunday is reserved for celebrating the Lord Himself. There are a few exceptions though and John the Baptist is one of those. Because John was so important in God's plan of salvation and is the forerunner of Jesus Christ, we do celebrate his feast day even though it is Sunday.

When John's father was informed that he was going to have a son, he was told that his son would be filled with the Holy Spirit "even in his mother's womb." In order to complete his own mission of preparing the people for the coming of Jesus Christ the Savior, John the Baptist needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Then, when he announced the coming of Jesus, he told the people that Jesus would be greater than him because Jesus was going to baptize people not just in water but in the Holy Spirit. We are baptized in the Holy Spirit because, just like John, we need the Spirit in our lives if we are going to feel the mission that Jesus Christ has given to each one of us. The article below, which was originally published in the **Word Among Us** magazine, explains what it means to be baptized in the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ.

With my prayers
Fr. Conley

The "Creative Force" of the Spirit Is for Everyone

Peter told the crowd that gathered that day that what they had just seen was not just for the apostles. "The promise is made to you and to your children and to all those far off" (Acts 2:39). Every one of them-and every one of us-can be filled with the Holy Spirit. So this month, as we prepare for the feast of Pentecost, we thought it would be good to examine what it means that we, "those far off," can be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Baptized with the Spirit? The phrase "baptize with the Holy Spirit" occurs in all four Gospels and in the Book of Acts (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 11:160). But as often as it shows up, it is not always clear what the term means. Then, to add to the confusion, the term has become a popular way for Pentecostals and people involved in the Charismatic Renewal to describe a spiritual awakening they have experienced. How can someone who has already been baptized and who has already received the Holy Spirit be "baptized" with this Spirit again?

Similarly, the idea of being "filled" with the Spirit is very common-especially in the Gospel of Luke and in the Book of Acts. But how can we be filled with the Spirit, when the Spirit already lives in us? So perhaps it might be best to start by talking about what it is not.

First, the experience of being baptized with the Spirit is not the same as sacramental Baptism. When we are baptized in the sacrament, our sins are washed away. We become adopted children of God and members of his Church. We are made citizens of heaven and heirs of Christ. We even receive the Holy Spirit as "the first installment of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:14). In short, Baptism makes us into a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

By contrast, being baptized or filled with the Spirit is more like a release of the grace of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It doesn't introduce anything "new" into our lives in the way Baptism does. It is more a matter of our experiencing what we

already have and experiencing it in a new, more powerful way.

Similarly, the idea of being filled with the Spirit is about an experience of God's love and presence so powerful that it fills our hearts with a new sense of joy or peace or love for God. The good news is that God wants all of us to be filled with his Spirit. He wants to give all of us life-changing experiences of his love and his grace.

The "Creative Force" of the Spirit. According to Pope Francis, the Holy Spirit is "the presence living and working in us" (Angelus, August 14, 2016). He calls this presence "a creative force that purifies and renews, that...transforms us from within, regenerates us and makes us able to love."

Francis talks about the Spirit renewing our hearts and the Church-waking us up to the power of faith, making our experience of God feel new again. This kind of renewal can be strong enough to change our hearts and to teach us how to love people we could never have loved before. His renewing, transforming power helps us to say no to temptation and yes to Jesus. And as we say yes more frequently, we find our lives changing.

But Francis is also quick to point out that this transforming work of the Holy Spirit isn't like magic. It doesn't just happen to us. We have a critical role to play. "If we open ourselves completely to the action of this fire which is the Holy Spirit, he will give us the boldness and the fervor to proclaim to everyone Jesus." But "if the Church does not receive this fire, or does not let it inflame her, she becomes a cold or merely lukewarm Church, incapable of giving life, because she is made up of cold and lukewarm Christians."

This is not a new teaching. It goes all the way back to Jesus and the apostles. But since we can be so prone to give in to the temptation to put the Holy Spirit aside, we need to be deliberate about our decisions. We need to be careful about the way we live our lives. Otherwise, we risk getting swept up in the demands of the day.

God's Work and Our Work. So what does being filled with the Spirit look like? What does it mean, as Pope Francis says, "to be set on fire by the Spirit?" As we said above, there is no one perfect definition. But perhaps the closest we can come is this description from St. Paul: "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Romans 5:5). It is an inner conviction, an interior realization, of how deeply God loves us. It's an experience of his love that we know did not come from us but that has welled up from the depths of our own heart.

In the next verse, Paul wrote that "while we were still helpless," Christ "died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person. . . But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6-7, 8).

There are two dimensions to this passage. First, Paul says that the Spirit's work of revealing God's love is something personal and private. It's something that happens in "our hearts" (Romans 5:5). Then he goes on to say that the proof of this love is based on a historical fact: Jesus' own death on the cross (5:6-8). When we are filled with the Spirit, the historical facts of Jesus' death come to life within our hearts. Just as Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit wants to take these facts and "declare" them to us in a new and life-giving way (John 16:14).

An example might help. Marriage is both a legal fact and a personal experience. There are both a marriage license and a bond of true love between a man and a woman. Now, if a couple were to decide to live together without any legal commitment, either one of them could feel free to walk away at any time. You need the sense of commitment involved in a binding marriage to solidify your relationship. At the same time, a legal marriage devoid of love is not real a marriage at all. It's little more than a formal, distant living arrangement.

Likewise, an experience of God's love without some understanding of the Gospel message and the reason for his love could leave us picking and choosing which part of his commandments we will follow. At the same time, if we know that Jesus died for our sins but don't experience his love personally, we'll assume that the best we can hope for is a distant, impersonal relationship with God based on rules and commands. (to be continued next week).

MOVIE "SEXUAL REVOLUTION"

Join us for dinner and a movie at St. Joseph Church, Pomfret on Friday, July 27. Food and fellowship begins at 6:30pm and the film begins at 7:30pm. Celebrating the beauty of the Church's teaching on married love, join us for a viewing of "Sexual Revolution: 50 Years Since Humanae Vitae", a brand new film that examines the effects of the free-love experiment on the Hippie Generation and the prophetic encyclical Humanae Vitae. Food, film and childcare are all FREE (donations gratefully accepted). RSVP to: <https://tinyurl.com/StJoesMovie>.

THE WILD GOOSE: Discovering a Deeper Relationship with the Holy Spirit

Twice a month on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:45 in the hall. Dinner included. Cost is \$10. Join fellow parishioners for learning, discussion, prayer & praise about the Holy Spirit! Sessions continue on 6/28, 7/12, 7/26, 8/9, 8/23. It doesn't matter if you can't attend every session. Each night will have its own graces. You can sign up in the foyer or by contacting Fr. Conley at 301-870-2220 ext 13 or frconley@comcast.net

INDIVIDUAL UNBOUND MINISTRY PRAYER

Do you long for freedom but feel unable to receive it? Do past sins, hurts, or memories weigh you down? On **Saturday June 30th, 2018** there will be trained teams available to provide individual prayer using the Unbound Model of prayer at **The Church of the Resurrection's school** in Ellicott City. Unbound Prayer is based on 5 scriptural keys that help you unlock those areas of your life where you want to receive greater freedom & spiritual growth. If you would like to schedule an appointment or want more information, please contact Dan Gahagan by **Tuesday June 26, 2018** at unboundministrymaryland@gmail.com. We ask that you read at least the first 7 chapters of the book ***Unbound***, by Neal Lozano prior to receiving prayer. (available at www.Amazon.com OR www.heartofthefather.com.)

RELIGIOUS GOODS STORE NEEDS HELP

We need some help to work after the 4 PM Mass. Please call Ellen Walls at 301- 579-2557 or Fay Adriani at 301-645-3531.

DRAWING ON THE WELL OF YOUR GENEROSITY

So far you 119 parishioners have donated/pledged **\$37,642.00** to the cost of our new well system. This is a great start. We ask everyone to do what they can as the cost of the work will be **\$122,500**.

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Don't take a vacation from your marriage! Come learn a technique of loving communication that you can use for the rest of your lives. It is a chance to look deeply into your relationship with each other and with God. Fill your marriage with joy! Sign up today to attend one of the upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends on August 3-5, 2018 in Hanover, MD, or November 2-4, 2018 in Gaithersburg, MD. Go to moments4marriage.org to sign-up or call 301-541-7007.

PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY! OCTOBER 2019

Come join Fr. Conley and many of your fellow parishioners on a pilgrimage to Rome, Sorrento, Naples, Assisi and more. See firsthand the major shrines and basilicas of Rome, visit the Sistine Chapel, the Vatican museums, Padre Pio's church where he received the stigmata, the Eucharistic miracle of Lanciano, and much, much more. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are included and accommodations are first class. Dates are 10/13/19- 10-23/19 with a possible extension to Florence. For more detailed information visit our website at www.pilgrimages.cpm/frconley or contact Sam Oliver at Samuel_oliver@comcast.net or at 301-848-3206.

*Please support our advertising sponsors. This week we recognize
Brinsfield Funeral Homes*

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Parishioners, 10am Glendon Heiston,
12N: Clarissa M. Williams, **MON:** 8am Larry Wood, **TUES:** 8am Maurice Long, Sr., **WED:** 8am Mary Jane Frere,
THURS: 8am Anna V. Garity, **FRI:** 9:30am Maurice Long, Sr., **SAT:** 9am Deacon Daniel Thompson, 4pm Mary Theresa Bowen.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:

Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Bill Branick, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Frances Card, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, James S. Dorsey, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Judy Istvan-Windsor, Irma Johnson, Regina Kijesky, Marie Knobel, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Jim Middleton, Mary Emma Middleton, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Ryan Myers, Joseph Quade, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Tim Welch, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$7,286.60. The unidentified donations totaled \$562.10.