

Homily for Pentecost Sunday (preached simultaneously in English and Spanish)
May 31, 2009

Introduction

Every year we rightly commemorate/celebrate the anniversary of our parish's founding. On a Pentecost Sunday in 1945 eleven Afro-American families launched what would become this amazing expression of Pentecost: Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish - a multi-cultural, open, welcoming faith community.

I

This year, however, let me focus on a longer tradition which has enormously influenced the amazing story that is Our Lady Queen of Peace. I refer, of course, to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit - the Spiritan priests - who have served this parish continuously since its beginnings.

II

On a Pentecost Sunday in 1703 a French priest, Father Claude Poullart des Places, founded the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. One hundred years later, after the upheavals of the French Revolution, the Congregation received a new impetus - a second founding - thanks to the Venerable Father Francis Libermann, a convert from the Jewish religious tradition.

After that the Congregation spread to 62 countries in five continents. The Spiritan fathers came to the United States in 1872 specifically to serve minorities, immigrants and ethnic groups here.

III

The extraordinary work that Fr. Len Tuozzolo is completing here in these days; the arrival of the ninth Spiritan pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace, Fr. Tim Hickey, and the presence of Fr. Simon Labon in these past two years as a Spiritan missionary to us, all give testimony to the constant and eminently successful work of each Spiritan pastor and priest who has served here.

Each of these great pastors has, I believe, taught, lived and preached with their lives the ideal expressed by Father Libermann when he stated his vision for the Congregation of the Holy Spirit: "practical union with God through the Holy Spirit".

Conclusion

I know that I speak for all of us who have benefited from your ministries when I thank the Congregation of the Holy Spirit for your presence at Queen of Peace during these 64 years of its life.

We are especially grateful that your congregation has continued its commitment to Our Lady Queen of Peace in sending Fr. Tim to continue this outstanding work.

Through all of you we have come to know the truth of the familiar prayer which, in fact, we heard just now in the Responsorial Psalm: "send forth your Spirit, O God, and we shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth".