

[Readings: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23]

For the last four years, on Pentecost Sunday, I have given an annual “State of the Parish” Report on how things have been progressing in our parish over the past twelve months. I need to forgo that this year, because on a larger scale, something Spirit-driven has been happening in our Archdiocese of Detroit for the past five years. Leading to Synod 2016, culminating in the pastoral letter from Archbishop Allen Vigneron: “Unleash the Gospel” and challenging every parish in the Archdiocese – including ours -- to move from a stagnant vision of spiritual maintenance to one of spiritual *mission*. *Maintenance* means to keep an eye on things as they are, with improvements or repairs only as needed. *Mission* means to think and pray outside the box. To renovate our broken hearts. To bring hope to the hopeless. My understanding is that this process has two directives or goals – personal conversion or reversion back to the practice of the faith, including a deeper relationship with the Lord, with Mary, His Mother, with the Communion of Saints, and within ourselves. Has this happened to you yet? If not, why not? What can we do to help make this happen? Something to pray about, to discern and to decide about!

The second directive or goal is for you and for me to go out into the world, to give witness, to attract others to Jesus Christ and to “renew the face of the earth” in the Spirit. We can start simply by learning each other’s names.

Whenever I begin or end a parish assignment, I always ask the parishioners in the beginning to keep telling me their name, so that I will remember them. If they don’t know what to say to me when I am leaving a parish, I simply ask them once again to tell me their name, so at least I can call them by name when saying good-bye. At every parish, I always mention, “I will remember your name, if you are a very good person, and especially if you are a very bad person.” So when I call someone by name, the first thing they say to me is, “OK, Father, which is it, am I good or am I bad?” And I say, “Yes...”

One of the reasons for this Name Tag Sunday is to introduce ourselves to each other just in case we don't know each other by name. I know this is done even without name tags in some churches on Sundays.

The well-meaning priest says to the congregation at the beginning of Mass: "Take a moment now to introduce yourselves to each other." Then, sometimes mockingly or to be cute, a married couple will say their names to each other, or brothers and sisters will say each other's name.

But then, there just might be that one person who always comes to church alone, who may have recently lost a parent, a spouse or a child to death, or whose only physical contact every week is with you and me in church. And when their face lights up when the person who has been sitting next to them or behind them or in front of them after months or years calls them by name, THAT, my friends, is the reason for this Name Tag Sunday!

Each parish in the Archdiocese is preparing to enter a new stage of "Unleash the Gospel." How will our parishes put "Unleash the Gospel" into practice in our homes, our families, our neighborhood, our communities? Here is what the Archbishop is telling us:

June 8, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Praise be to Jesus Christ, now and forever!

At the first Pentecost, Christ came to His apostles and breathed onto them the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

He breathes on us today, his faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit. We find ourselves very much like the apostles who were gathered in a room. Like them, our hearts rejoice when we encounter Jesus. Like them, he sends us on a mission and gives us his Holy Spirit so that we may go out and Unleash the Gospel. God is pouring out his Spirit so we can continue the work of the apostles. The Spirit enables us to proclaim the Good News to those in our families, workplaces and communities. The Holy Spirit, our Advocate, gives us the courage to continue our missionary journey.

And on this day, I would like to announce the **next phase of our movement to Unleash the Gospel: the renewal of our parishes**. For the Gospel to truly be unleashed, we must re-found our parishes so that everything we do — how we pray, how we minister, how we serve — leads us to be more effective witnesses to the Gospel.

This next phase of our missionary journey will require prayer, innovation, and hard work so that our parish communities become what God made them to be: places where individuals and families encounter Jesus anew, grow as his disciples, and are equipped to be witnesses of the Risen Christ.

To spark this transformation, each parish in the Archdiocese will create a plan to realign all its activity and ministry to our shared mission to Unleash the Gospel. These missionary strategic plans will provide the direction and focus for each parish's missionary transformation.

Today, ten parishes in the Archdiocese will begin the process of creating these plans. I am grateful for the apostolic courage of these first pastors and their parishes. Other parishes will follow early next year and more will continue after.

This is nothing short of a complete overhaul of our Church in Detroit — a task too great to do on our own. But we are not alone. Christ is with us. We cannot fail, because we are in communion with the risen Jesus and we act in the power of his Spirit.

So, I ask you to join me in prayer. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to come and transform our hearts and our parishes. Let us pray for boldness in our plans and efforts. Let us pray that each one of our parishes may discern how it is called to Unleash the Gospel with its unique set of gifts and circumstances.

As a parish and individually at home, from now and until the feast of Christ the King, let us join in this **Prayer for the Next Phase of Unleash the Gospel:**

*Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the abundant graces of Synod 16:
for awakening in us the vision and resolve
to become again your Church on mission,*

*eagerly working together to “make disciples of all nations,”
according to our commission from the Lord Jesus.
Pour out upon us your Holy Spirit, as a new Pentecost,
to guide us in our next phase in our movement to Unleash the Gospel.
By his power at work in us, transform our parishes
into bands of joyful missionary disciples.
Come Holy Spirit:
Set our hearts on fire to share the Good News of Jesus with all those
who stumble in darkness, who hunger for hope, who thirst for eternal life.
Above all, grant us the boldness and courage of the apostles
to put the mission above all else,
so that our community becomes the spark
to ignite the fire of divine love that transforms this time and this place
into the Kingdom of Heaven.
We pray through the intercession of Our Lady,
Star of the New Evangelization,
and her mother, our Patron, St. Anne;
and in the spirit of Blessed Solanus we thank you ahead of time
for “accomplishing in us far more than all we ask or imagine.”
We ask all of this in the all-powerful name of the Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns forever.
Amen.*

Sincerely yours in Christ, The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit.

Copies of this prayer are available at the Sunday Offering boxes at the ends of the aisles. I ask every person to take one prayer card each. So that couples and single people may pray this prayer at home. So that families may pray this prayer together. Please pray this prayer daily if possible, or at least once a week. Prayer will change our hearts, our community and our world!

Come, Holy Spirit, Come! AMEN! ALLELUIA!