



*The Second Annunciation, Pat Olding
Priest's Sacristy, Annunciation Parish*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Risen, Ascended, and Spirit-Bestowing Lord,

Today we celebrate the great festival of Pentecost, the culmination of the Easter Mysteries. Christ suffered, died, was buried, rose from the dead, and ascended, in our flesh. And now, eternally at the Father's right hand, pours forth their Spirit upon all flesh. Upon the Church, upon you and me, in Baptism and Confirmation and Eucharist. Upon all!

This is prefigured in Israel's Passover. Passing through the waters of the Red Sea, delivered from slavery, Israel anticipated our Baptism into Christ's Death and Resurrection, delivering us from sin and death. Fifty days later – the origin of the Jewish Festival of Pentecost – Israel receives the Law at Mt. Sinai, with Moses ascending that mount to the presence of God; a writing of God's will on stone, confirming them in their newfound freedom, prefiguring the Ascension that "confirms" Jesus's Resurrection and anticipates the Confirmation of our Baptism.

Finally, after years of wandering, with miraculous bread in the wilderness, Israel enters the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey, the Feast awaiting them. And we, the Baptized and Confirmed, come at last to the Eucharist. The Feast prepared for us by the working of the Spirit, *and so Father, we bring you these gifts...we ask you to make them holy by the power of your Spirit.* Our Eucharist is a continuing Pentecost. *May all who share in this one bread and one chalice become one spirit, one body, in Christ.* One faith, among many languages, the Acts of the Apostles tells us; the grace of the Eucharist is the unity of believers. Every Mass, Pentecost.

The image at the top of this reflection was painted by parishioner Pat Olding for our 100th Anniversary in 2010. She entitled it *The Second Annunciation*. Her inspiration came from walking down Resor Avenue and catching the site of the old pavilion (currently under contract for sale), which was the original church, simultaneously seeing the “new” church, our current church. If there was an old church and a new church, then one was first and the other came second. Hence the name of her work.

But there’s more, she understood, as the Spirit – depicted as tradition has it, in the form of a dove – moves among us, the Spirit continually makes new. Second chances, second opportunities to receive and respond to God’s goodness. A “graced do-over,” if you will. The favors of the Lord are renewed each morning, Scripture reminds us.

The artist saw two buildings, serving in succession as the places where we gathered, at the Spirit’s bidding, to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass, to partake of Communion, to experience Pentecost. To enter the courts of the Lord, to feast in Him. That first Pentecost “made” the Church; Eucharist makes the Church.

The Spirit moves among us, and the Spirit will give us second opportunities, and countless more besides. As we anticipate returning to public worship in the near future, after weeks and months of stay-at-home, we, like Israel approaching that Promised Land, now salute these glorious mysteries from afar. And when we once again return to our Sunday observance, still we will journey through the weeks that become years and lifetimes, guided by the Spirit, until at last we enter that eternal feast.

May God Bless,
Fr. Grogan