



Do not be afraid

>> Father Ron Hutchinson,
director of priestly vocations for the
Diocese of Grand Rapids.

“W

hen the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them

tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4

In only a few weeks we will once again celebrate the day of Pentecost, a feast that is often referred to as the birthday of the church. This feast recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and the beginning of their witness to the crucified and risen Christ. With the descent of the Holy Spirit the apostles were no longer held captive by their fear, but rather they were filled with God's grace so that they could go out into the world to share the good news.

This feast is a reminder that each of us having received the Holy Spirit has also been called by God to live our discipleship in such a way that we preach the good news in word and deed. Still others in our midst have been called not only to the priesthood of believers, but to the sacramental priesthood. This feast challenges those who hear a call to serve God and God's people as priests to answer that call without fear, trusting in the Lord's plan for their lives.

Fear of God's call is nothing new. All throughout sacred Scripture we see individuals who hear God's call but, because of the fear that fills them, they ignore it, try to run from it, or even try to negotiate with God so that they can avoid what God is asking of them. It is no different today, men are still being called to serve God in a particular and special way as priests, but because of the fear that fills them they try to follow the path of many before them who have tried to disregard God's call. These men need to remind themselves that God does not call anyone to serve Him in a particular way without providing the grace necessary to carry out that call. And just like individuals throughout salvation history, God doesn't ask anything that they are not capable of doing.

Throughout his ministry as pope, John Paul II encouraged people with the words of Jesus, “do not be afraid.” With these words our late Holy Father was trying to remind all of us, but especially young people, that God's plan for our lives is not to be feared, but rather to be embraced. Fear doesn't accomplish anything. It shackles us in such a way that we are unable to respond to God and His plan for us. What the church needs today are men who are willing to break the grip of fear and respond generously to God's call and plan for their lives.

But the fear the individual being called by God may experience is not the only shackle often faced. The fear that fills those around them (i.e. parents, relatives, friends, members of the faith community) can further constrain a man who is hearing a call to serve as a priest. This fear can manifest itself in such a way that it discourages men from answering God's call.

Like those of the early Church each of us is called to set aside our fears and embrace opportunities to serve God and one another as we forge ahead to the promised gathering of all the faithful that awaits. Do not be afraid!

Priest Appointments 2009

Bishop Walter Hurley has announced the following pastoral appointments effective July 1, 2009:



Rev. Rock J. Badgerow, currently pastor of St. Patrick Parish, Parnell, to pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Weare and St. Vincent Mission, Pentwater.



Rev. Matthew J. Barnum, presently associate pastor at Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids to pastor of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish and St. Jean Baptiste, Muskegon.



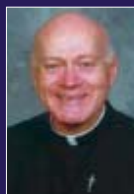
Rev. M. Thomas Bolster, presently pastor of St. James Parish, Grand Rapids to pastor of St. Gregory Parish, Hart, with canonical responsibility for St. Joseph Chapel, Elbridge.



Rev. Thomas F. Boufford, presently pastor of St. Bartholomew, Newaygo and Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission, Grant to pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Ionia.



Rev. Michael A. Danner, presently pastor of St. Jude Parish, Grand Rapids is granted senior priest status.



Rev. Daniel R. DePew, presently pastor of Holy Trinity Parish, Comstock Park to pastor of St. Mary Parish, Spring Lake.



Rev. Melvin E. Fox, presently pastor of SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Ionia is granted senior priest status.



Rev. Victor Kynam, currently associate pastor at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Grand Rapids to pastor at St. Edward Parish, Lake Odessa and St. Anthony Parish, Saranac.