

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Today, as we mark the conclusion of the eight- week Celebration of the Resurrection, we have an exceptional opportunity to assemble like Mary and the Apostles in the Upper Room. This is after all the great Feast of Pentecost and the *birthday* of the Church! The driving wind and tongues of fire effectively transform the timid apostles into passionate evangelists, a turning point in their lives. The travelers from Rome – many devout Jews and Jewish converts who were standing nearby – witness that fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit through the gift of tongues and come away amazed at hearing the disciples speaking in their distinctive native languages. Our readings today are seamlessly infused with this compelling

energy, its fruits and effects.

Our First Reading from Acts places us at that First Pentecost where we experience the fulfillment of Jesus' earlier promise - to send the Advocate upon his apostles. In the Second Reading, St. Paul expands the awareness of how the various spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit enrich the entire Universal Church. How striking it is, that 'the Holy Spirit distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank, for the building up of the Church' [Catechism 482]. You may have wondered, or perhaps already know that you have been gifted with a particular grace from your Baptism, that contributes to the integrity or to the body of our Church.

Our Gospel relates how the Risen Lord gives His apostles a foretaste of Pentecost on the evening of Easter Sunday by appearing to them and shepherding them to carry on the mission given Him by His Heavenly Father. Just like our priestly ordinations, Jesus empowers them to go out fearlessly by breathing upon them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." The gift of the Spirit would also enable them to fulfill Jesus' commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. The Holy Spirit was like an alarm clock, a compelling wake-up call to the apostles! No longer afraid, we see that they were filled with an ineffable joy, ready to move out and demonstrate this Inspiration. Can we also implore the Holy Spirit for that fire to renew and strengthen those gifts especially at those times when we are discerning God's will in our lives? A personalized question is; what gift do I have that I can voluntarily share with my fellow pilgrims at St. Joseph the Worker in Madisonville, Tennessee? In the words of Pope Paul VI, "The Church needs a perennial Pentecost. She needs fire in her heart, words on her lips, prophecy in her outlook."

Blessings for a Holy Pentecost!