



FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Last weekend I shared at the Masses that I celebrated, that twenty-five years ago, I was asked to be the godparent of friends' first born son. It was a privilege and an honor to be asked and to serve in that role in his faith development. It was eleven years ago that my godson came and asked me, if I would serve as his confirmation sponsor. Once again it was an honor and a privilege to be asked and to serve that role in his maturing faith development, as well as to see him grow and mature into a caring and compassionate young man. I can imagine parents and grandparents know personally well that family members grow up before our very eyes, at times amazing us how much they have grown and matured, and how the years pass at what seems to be an incredibly rapid pace.

My godson had moved out to Arizona during the middle of COVID, a move that would impact his life and his vocation. Shortly after his move, into his life and soon into his heart, enters one Lexi Colaianne. They met, became friends and in time, became lovers. This past Friday evening, on June 10, they exchanged vows to love one another until death do they part. Surrounded by family and friends that traveled from across the country to be with them, to celebrate with them and to pray with them, they now begin their vocation as husband and wife.

This weekend I am joining parishioners in Kansas City for the wedding of their daughter and her soon to be husband. I look forward to this wonderful celebration. The wedding is taking place at the church that the bride's grandparents, parents, and aunts were married in. It will be a special moment for all in the family who call this church their home as well as for the bride and groom who will walk down the aisle, out of the church to begin living the vows of marriage. Wouldn't it be wonderful if their children, having been reared in the Catholic faith, one day in the future are back at this church for another family wedding, perhaps the fourth generation of family members?

Today we celebrate the feast of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In a recent email, I received the following reflection by the friend of a parishioner on the Feast of Pentecost. I share it with you this weekend.

"During the past two years we have learned about many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, not the least of which -- in the early days -- was the need for respirators. A respirator is a medical device designed to help a patient breathe when their lungs are compromised by some pulmonary disease or dysfunction.

As we have learned, for COVID-19 patients this can mean the difference between life and death.

It is notable that the word respirator has the same root as the word Spirit. It means to breathe. And as we reflect on the possible meanings of Pentecost, I think we should pay attention to the notion that the Holy Spirit represents a kind of respirator for the Church, and ultimately for the World.

At a physiological level, breathing allows us to take in oxygen needed to metabolize the sugars provided by our food. More to the point, it energizes our activity. The food on our tables may well be the result of our labors, but no grocery store in the world includes an Oxygen Aisle. That life sustaining element is an invisible but fundamental and necessary driver of life on this planet.

In this context then, we might think of the Holy Spirit as the means by which our human intentions and labors are infused with the (invisible) Grace of God's fundamental reality, thereby helping us to collectively breathe.

And, as with oxygen, the combined effect of human labor and Divine Grace should be nothing less than the propagation of Life. That is, the Life in which we are all called to participate.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus himself announced the presence and support of the Holy Spirit in our world. Over the course of time we have ascribed a variety of attributes and Gifts to The Spirit, but I wonder if the most important aspect of the Spirit's work is to simply help us ... All ... To ... Just ... Keep... Breathing."

May we all breathe prayerfully these summer days!

GOD BLESS YOU!

Fr. Mike Naciri