



A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Edward J. Burns

Pentecost Sunday • June 8, 2025

POST-SYNODAL PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Blessed Pentecost to you! These seven weeks of the Easter season have been a time of abundant grace for the Diocese of Dallas. The word Pentecost, derived from the Greek word pentekonta, meaning "fifty," marks the fiftieth day after Easter. For the Israelites, it was a celebration fifty days after the Passover; for us, it is the fulfillment of that tradition in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Catechism beautifully proclaims that at Pentecost, "Christ's Passover is fulfilled in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, manifested, given, and

communicated as a divine person" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 731).

When I celebrate Confirmation in our parishes, I remind the confirmandi that they are receiving the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the Apostles in the Upper Room. As the Spirit transformed their lives that day, He continues to transform ours.

Like the Apostles, who were filled with joy even amidst uncertainty, we are invited to place our trust in the Lord—to rely more deeply on His providence to animate our lives with love and mercy.



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—BISHOP EDWARD J. BURNS



OUR DIOCESAN SYNOD: REKINDLING THE ZEAL OF PENTECOST

When I initiated our diocesan synod in 2021, I urged us to rediscover the faith and trust of that original apostolic community: to call upon the risen Lord as they did, to beg Him to set our hearts ablaze with the zeal of the Holy Spirit, and to strengthen us to go forth and proclaim Christ crucified and risen—the only hope for the world. As our synodal journey continues, that prayer remains just as vital.

This synod has been, at its heart, a movement of

renewal—a call to activate the faithful, rekindle our missionary identity, and restore the Diocese from within. The Church, though holy, is not without fault in her members and leaders. Yet we must never lose sight of the Spirit who guides and sustains her. The Church endures not by human strength, but through the power of the Holy Spirit and “Christ’s total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 766).

Let us not allow the gifts of the Spirit to lie dormant. These are divine graces, given through the sacrifice of Christ, and entrusted to us so that we may faithfully follow Him. As *Ad gentes* reminds us: “Let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the Faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life” (*Ad gentes*, 36).

DISCIPLES FOR OUR TIME

The Church and the world need faithful, courageous disciples—those who are bold, dedicated, and rooted in Christ, strengthened through the intercession of His Blessed Mother and encouraged by the lives of saints who have gone before us. Even amid daily responsibilities and worldly concerns, the laity are called to be powerful witnesses of the Gospel. “Even when preoccupied with temporal cares, the laity can and must perform a work of great value for the evangelization of the world” (*Lumen gentium*, 35).

As we look ahead to the release of our synod pastoral plan in December, let us prepare ourselves spiritually to receive it with apostolic zeal. This mission is not optional—it was given to us at Pentecost.

On this Pentecost, I encourage you to recall that the Holy Spirit has equipped us for this mission. In Baptism we received the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and in Confirmation these gifts were strengthened and sealed.

These gifts—Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord—are not abstract. They are gifts meant to shape our lives and animate our Christian witness. When we are open to the Spirit’s movement, we become instruments



of renewal, both in our hearts and in the world. Again, we cannot let these gifts lie dormant. It is important that we “fan into flame the gifts of God” that we have received (2 Timothy 1:6).

True evangelization begins with knowing and embracing the Lord and the gifts He has entrusted to us. As Pope Francis reminds us in *Evangelii gaudium*: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples... An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has

taken the initiative, He has loved us first” (*Evangelii gaudium*, 24).

Our Diocese is taking steps to address the needs surfaced through the synod. Yet real renewal demands more than policies—it requires transformation of hearts. St. Paul urges us: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind” (Romans 12:2). May our diocesan and parish life reflect this inner conversion, rooted in the radical love Christ pours into us.





A MISSIONARY CHURCH, SENT FORTH BY CHRIST

Each of us has a unique role in proclaiming Christ. Our mission—rooted in our vocation and circumstances—is to bring the risen Lord to the world.

Clergy are entrusted with sanctifying God’s people through the sacraments and shepherding them through preaching and pastoral care. The laity, too, are charged with spreading the Gospel in daily life—through acts of charity, witness, and joyful fidelity. As Apostolicam actuositatem teaches, the laity should grow in love for their own diocese and parish, ever ready to support and collaborate in its mission.

The Church’s mission cannot succeed without your active participation. Your gifts, when received and cultivated, equip you to serve the Church and build up the Body of Christ: “The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone for profit” (*Lumen gentium*, 12).

God often works in unexpected ways. We must remain open to His will and attentive to the Spirit’s promptings. Now is the time to journey forward together — as one Church, one Diocese — guided by the Holy Spirit.

Let us never forget the words of the risen Lord: **“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you”** (John 20:21).

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas

