

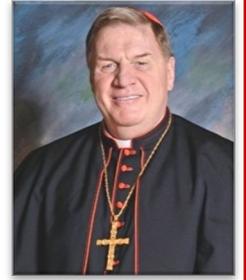


Rejoice in the Lord

By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

Archbishop of Newark

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Come, Holy Spirit, bring us joys that never end

The Solemnity of Pentecost completes our celebration of the joy of Easter. In the images contained in the marvelous Sequence of Pentecost, “Veni, Sancte Spiritus,” we call on the third person of the Blessed Trinity to come into our hearts, bringing light for our darkness, comfort for our distress, healing for our soul’s sickness, warmth for our frozen hearts, and joys that will never end.

Why would we ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of unending joy? We know that our lives are filled with sorrow and disappointment. We know that even after receiving God’s saving grace and being reconciled to him in the sacrament of penance, we will sin again. We know that all those whom we love, and we ourselves, will one day suffer and die. What’s the point of asking for joy that will not end?

Our faith is weak, isn’t it? Just six weeks ago, we celebrated the great miracle of our salvation and the true source of all human hope and joy. We believe that the Lord is risen, that he has conquered sin and death, and that we are truly free.

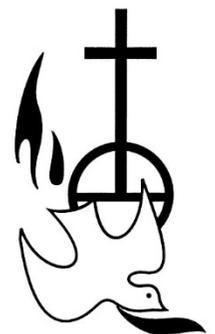
We believe this, and yet we have our doubts. We hope in him, and yet we give in to sadness and despair. This is precisely why Christ sent us his Holy Spirit—to give us courage in our weakness, to sustain us in our fidelity to his Word, and, yes, to fill our hearts with joys that never end!

Recall what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI once said in an Easter message “Urbi et Orbi” (to the city and the world): “Easter does not work magic. Just as the Israelites found the desert awaiting them on the far side of the Red Sea, so the Church after the Resurrection always finds history filled with joy and hope, grief and anguish.”

Joy and hope do not eliminate our grief and anguish. They transform them—making them like the Lord’s Passion and death: a participation in the painful pilgrimage of human suffering to the abundant joy of eternal life.

This is why Easter is the season of hope. Our hope is not idealism, a form of “wishful thinking.” Our hope is not political or ideological. It is Christian realism, grounded in the person of Jesus Christ and in the story of his life, death and resurrection.

Christian hope is not an illusion. As the Letter to the Hebrews assures us, “We have [hope] as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul” (Heb 6:19). We are truly anchored regardless of the storms we encounter every day. For Christians, life’s difficulties are



not eliminated. They are endured with confidence and transformed by the joyful hope of the Risen Christ.

That's why we dare to ask for joys that never end. We know that we need the help of God's grace to face the pain and the weariness of daily life. We know that we need the Spirit's sevenfold gifts (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord) to sustain us in life's journey. We know that, as Pope Benedict reminded us, "the Church after the Resurrection always finds history filled with joy and hope, grief and anguish."

That was certainly true for the disciples of Jesus. Many faced bitter persecution and death as they carried out the Lord's great commission to go out to the whole world as missionaries and to preach the Gospel and heal the sick in his name. They experienced no end of suffering and disappointment, but they served the Lord joyfully because they were empowered by the Holy Spirit and they were burning with the fire of God's love.

We long for joy that never ends. As Pope Francis tells us, this joy is available to us if we can step out of our comfort zones and become missionary disciples who give ourselves wholeheartedly to proclaiming the Good News.

So, let us pray: Holy Spirit of God, come, pour your dew on our dryness. Melt our frozen hearts and guide us when we go astray. Give us endless joy. Amen. Alleluia! †

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

"GIFTED TO GIVE"

The 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Gospel in the Philippines

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with joy that I greet the Filipino clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of Newark as they celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the arrival of the Gospel in the Philippines. Together with them, the Archdiocese recalls with gratitude the providential landing of Ferdinand Magellan on one of their more than seven thousand islands in 1521. The first Mass was celebrated on the islands by Fray Pedro de Valderrama, OSA, on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1521.

For 500 years, the Philippines has treasured the gift of its Catholic faith. The seeds of faith were planted by Spanish missionaries and quickly took root in the hearts of Filipinos, which are naturally disposed to the divine. The same faith sustains most Filipinos to this day, making the Philippines the

largest Catholic country in Asia. It is the faith, centered on the Eucharist, that makes them grateful for their daily bread, welcoming as they are welcomed to the Eucharistic banquet, joyful to break open the Word with others, and willing to be broken themselves for the sake of the Gospel.

This jubilee year recognizes gratefully the missionaries who brought the faith to the Philippines, the ancestors who accepted the faith and passed it on, generation after generation, the bishops, priests, religious, and lay ministers who have been at the vanguard of the Filipinos' spiritual journey.



Gifted to Give is the theme of the 500th Anniversary Celebration. This focus aims to renew the call to the mission of all the baptized and draws its inspiration from the command of Jesus to his disciples: “What you have received as a gift, give as a gift” (Mt 10:8).

In his homily at the Mass he celebrated for and with Filipinos at St. Peter’s Basilica on March 14, 2021, Pope Francis said:

Wherever they (Filipinos) go to work, they sow the faith. It is part of your genes, a blessed “infectiousness” that I urge you to preserve. Keep bringing the faith, the good news you received five hundred years ago, to others. I want to thank you, then, for the joy you bring to the whole world and to our Christian communities, where your discreet and hardworking presence became a testimony of faith. In the footsteps of Mary and Joseph, for God loves to bring the joy of faith through humble, hidden, courageous and persevering service.”

Today, millions of Filipino migrants present in some 200 countries share the gift of faith they have received. In their new homes, Filipinos faithfully live their Christian faith, often in unassuming and unheralded ways. They preach the Gospel by their actions. In parishes and communities, they take an active part in worship while serving as members of the choir, readers, Eucharistic ministers, catechists, and volunteers in so many parish activities. They enrich their parishes with a rich array of beautiful cultural and religious traditions. In countries where the practice of the Christian faith is difficult, even dangerous, I have witnessed courageous Filipino Catholics who find ways to come together and worship.

Our Archdiocese is blessed with thousands of Filipino lay faithful who actively participate in the life of the Church. Another blessing is the service of 46 Filipino priests who labor in parishes and other ministries.

The Filipino clergy of the Archdiocese of Newark will be leading the celebrations throughout the year to mark this significant milestone. Masses will be celebrated to commemorate various significant events in Philippine history. A replica of the Magellan Cross, along with the images of Santo Nino and Our Lady of Manaoag, will journey on a pilgrimage to 12 Jubilee Churches in the archdiocese and the Diocese of Paterson. I invite everyone, especially our Filipino faithful, to participate fully in these celebrations. A Program of Activities of the 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of the gospel in the Philippines is available [online](http://www.rcan.org) at www.rcan.org.

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! May the Lord, who has gifted us with faith, grant us generous hearts that will share the same faith to others! May our Mother of Perpetual Help watch over your families and communities!

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope



We find here four essential characteristics of ecclesial life: listening to the apostles' teaching, first; second, the safeguarding of mutual communion; third, the breaking of the bread; and fourth, prayer. They remind us that the Church's existence has meaning if it remains firmly united to Christ, that is, in community, in his Word, in the Eucharist and in prayer. It is the way we unite ourselves to Christ. Preaching and catechesis bear witness to the words and actions of the Teacher; the constant quest for fraternal communion shields us from selfishness and particularism; the breaking of the bread fulfills the sacrament of Jesus' presence among us. He will never be absent; it is really him in the Eucharist. He lives and walks with us. And lastly, prayer, which is the space of dialogue with the Father, through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

Everything in the Church that grows outside of these “coordinates” lacks a foundation. To discern a situation, we need to ask ourselves: in this situation, how are these four coordinates present — preaching, the constant search for fraternal communion — charity — the breaking of the bread — that is, Eucharistic life — and prayer. Any situation needs to be evaluated in the light of these four coordinates. Whatever is not part of these coordinates lacks ecclesiality, it is not ecclesial. It is God who creates the Church, not the clamor of works. The Church is not a market; the Church is not a group of businesspeople who go forward with a new business. The Church is the work of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to us to gather us together. The Church is precisely the work of the Spirit in the Christian community, in the life of the community, in the Eucharist, in prayer... always. And everything that grows outside of these coordinates lacks a foundation, it is like a house built upon sand (cf. Mt 7:24-27). It is God who creates the Church, not the clamor of works. It is Jesus' word that fills our efforts with meaning. It is in humility that we build the future of the world.

(Pope Francis, General Audience, November 25, 2020)

My Prayer for You

Lord, help us to walk with you, together, as sisters and brothers who listen to one another, who pray together and who work tirelessly in all humility to build the future of the world. Without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing, but when our hearts are filled with the power of your Divine Love and Goodness, all things are possible. Amen.

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.

