

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair  
Bishop of Toledo in America

To the Clergy, Religious and Laity of the Diocese of Toledo:  
May the Peace of the Risen Christ be with You.



My Dear Friends,

During this joyful Easter season we have the privilege of celebrating together our new life in Christ, risen from the dead. The mystery of Christ's saving work is made present and fruitful among us thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit whose outpouring we will commemorate on May 31, Pentecost Sunday.

Once again this year I invite parishes and individuals, from May 22-30, to pray the **Novena of the Holy Spirit**, which was published in booklet form by our diocese last year and favorably received by so many people. What was printed reflects last year's calendar, but it can be used again with a few editorial adjustments. On our diocesan website you will now find a version that reflects these adjustments.

In imitation of Mary and the disciples in the Upper Room for nine days between the Ascension and Pentecost, we implore an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. He alone is our source of life and power for the mission we have received to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

This year that mission needs the special blessing of the Holy Spirit for a specific purpose. In preparation for the **100th anniversary of the Diocese of Toledo in 2010**, I have asked all parishes to be involved in a program of evangelization, that is, an organized effort to share with others the good news of Christ, the good news of our Catholic Faith.

The theme is The Spirit of Jesus Alive Today: Pentecost in Our Time. Most parishes will participate directly in the diocesan program of that name. Some parishes have determined that a locally designed program better addresses their needs.

The diocesan program is built on the principle that personal contact is the most effective means of invitation and welcome. Parishioners are being organized to make home visits in their local communities in the hope that this personal contact will be used by God to draw into the "Catholic communion of the Church" people who have no church or who have fallen away from the practice of the faith. Happy and confident parishioners with a commitment to and love for their Catholic Faith bring a spiritual energy to evangelization that is far more effective than any media blitz or letter survey.

This is a wonderful opportunity for you who are the lay faithful to be actively involved in the life and mission of your parish and the wider Church. Every parishioner can be involved, whether you visit homes or not. All are encouraged to provide the necessary spiritual support through prayer, especially the Pentecost Novena, and through good works offered up as an appeal to God. Others might help prepare welcoming activities at the parish as part of the follow-up.

At any time, we can and should take advantage of opportunities to bear witness to our faith with friends, neighbors, family and co-workers. If we truly take to heart our obligation to make Christ better known and loved, then our parishes and our diocese will be blessed with new life in the next century.

In the months to come there will be more news about the Centenary of our diocese, which was founded on April 15, 1910. For now, I am happy to announce that the celebration will begin on our diocesan patronal feast, October 7, 2009, the Feast of the Holy Rosary, with a **Mass in the Cathedral at noon that will be broadcast live nationwide on the EWTN network**. Needless to say, we are hoping for a full cathedral that day from parishes throughout the diocese. More specific information will be forthcoming.

"Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful. Enkindle in them the fire of your love!" May the language of love be our motivating force, our guiding light, and the fruit of our efforts. "Come, Holy Spirit, Come!"

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