

## FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Monday, the Church celebrates with great joy the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. This beautiful feast (Our Parish's Feast Day!), placed by the Holy Father in the Octave of Pentecost, invites us to contemplate the mystery of the Church being born from the side of Christ on the Cross and from the heart of Mary in the Upper Room.

After the Ascension of the Lord, the Apostles did not disperse. They returned to the Upper Room, "with one accord devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers." There, gathered in prayer and expectation, the Church was born on the day of Pentecost through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And at the center of that praying community was Mary.

Have we discovered, with immense gratitude, this maternal face of the Church? Mary is not a secondary figure. She is the perfect icon of the Church. Just as she gave her flesh to the Word of God, the Church is called to welcome the Word, to let it become flesh in our lives, and to give it to the world. Let us look at her journey: She believed the impossible ("How can this be?"). She sang the Magnificat, proclaiming that God lifts up the lowly and scatters the proud. She journeyed through the desert to Egypt, living the exile of faith. She stood silently at the foot of the Cross, participating in the Paschal Mystery without fleeing. And finally, she received the beloved disciple as her son, a sign that she becomes Mother of all those reborn in Christ.

This is the path we are called to walk as well. Through the Word of God that we listen to at least once a week, through the Eucharist that nourishes us, and through the fraternal communion that the Lord gives us, we are being formed as a Church that is truly maternal, a Church that generates, accompanies, suffers, and rejoices with her children.

In these times, when so many are confused and the faith is weakening in many places, the Lord is raising up parishes that, like Mary, know how to remain, to pray, to wait, and to give courageous witness. The Church invites us to receive the Grace to help us live this maternal dimension: to welcome the brother who is far away, to accompany those in the process of conversion, to celebrate the Passover of the Lord with songs of joy even in the midst of trials.

Therefore, let us prepare our hearts for this coming feast. Let us ask Mary, Mother of the Church, to visit us as she visited Elizabeth. Let her teach us: To treasure the Word in our hearts and ponder it every day. To live the Cross with faith and without complaint. To remain in prayer with one accord. To be a parish where the Signs of Faith are given so that, seeing them, all can be led to Eternal Life.

May she, who is the Star of the Sea and Help of Christians, guide our parish and all our families. May she obtain for us the gift of a renewed Pentecost, so that we may become lights of hope in this dark time. Let us celebrate this feast with joy! Holy Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us! Come, Holy Spirit, and renew the face of the earth!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr. Jason'.