



# Catholic Diocese of Victoria

*Office of the Bishop*

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June 5, 2022 – Pentecost

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As we recall every year at this time, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, bursting into the locked upper room as a mighty wind, and appearing as tongues of fire upon the astonished believers.

These first witnesses had already encountered the Risen Jesus, and it seems that those resurrection appearances were meant to heal their faith. But the disciples, grief-stricken and frightened, were in many ways still frozen in indifference and self-protection. When the Holy Spirit came for them, their grief and fear of loss was overcome with the boldness of providence.

The life of the Christian community in each generation faces the same locked doors of indifference and self-protection, the same desperate wish to hold on to the security of upper rooms. But time and time again, the indifferent malaise of fear and rigid preoccupation is fired up by the Holy Spirit of boldness. In each generation, the Holy Spirit works to deliver every Christian from their fears of going to the existential and geographical frontiers of their current time. The boldness of the Holy Spirit always equips the people of God for mission.

In every age, the tensions of fear, the grieving of loss, and the false securities of “how things used to be” will be met with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - a Spirit of Providence, bringing gifts ever-new and varied to every Christian believer. These gifts of this Spirit of Providence are not so much a plan or a program, like a to-do list or carefully crafted business case, but rather a spiritual impulse much like the rushing wind and fire of the first Pentecost, which drove the rigidly fearful disciples out of the upper room of indifference to a world both hoping for and fearful of the tomorrow of history.

Each person and each generation lives through the fearful, agonizing terror of the walls of their upper room closing in. And each is invited to experience the freedom, boldness, and life ever new of the Holy Spirit. In our own time of increasing wars and calamities and worries about every kind of scarcity, the Holy Spirit comes to us with new and varied gifts for the building up of the body of Christ and the strengthening of its members. In our own Diocese, we can see the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work through the responses we have received to our Synod process, and I look forward to sharing the Synod Committee’s report with you soon.

The providence of our God is always pouring forth gifts. A focus on scarcity rather than gift is the mindset of the upper room. The disciples left the upper room a long time ago - not of their own will, but by the abundant grace of the Holy Spirit.

And so we pray: dear God, fill the hearts of all with your love and renew the garden of the earth. May all fear and brokenness of human hearts be healed, may all environmental ecologies be repaired, and may you and your provident gifts be always received with joy. Mary, Mother of the Church, inspire us with your openness to the Holy Spirit.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria