

## Endings and Beginnings

Life is all about endings and beginnings: as the saying goes, "when the Lord closes a door, somewhere he opens another." The Feast of Ascension celebrates then ending of the Lord's physical presence on this earth ... only to allow a new door to open: the door of the Church and her Mission. The Lord ascended only to descend into the Sacraments and the Mission of the church, which is our Mission entrusted to us by Christ, himself.

This time of the year sees many doors closing and new doors opening up: students graduating from school or university moving on to new schools and new careers and vocations; people committing to marriage, closing the door to life as a single person and opening the door to a whole new way of family and couple living; children receiving their First Holy Communion, closing the door of sitting in the pews at Communion to a new door of active participation in the Mass; the door of a difficult winter is closing and the door of summertime is slowly opening; people close the door to apartment living and open a new door of a new home...talk about a metaphor becoming literal!

Yes, life is about old doors closing and new doors opening...endings and beginnings. The Church is aptly called a "pilgrim" church by the Second Vatican Council for we are moving in time, hopefully allowing old doors to close so that new doors...new expressions of life and ministry can



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be opened.

Our parish is about to close a door: in two weeks this space and our front portal door will be closed to begin renovation. And in the "in between time" we will worship in our parish center. We will be prayerfully waiting to open a new door of the church building and a new door in the history of our parish. Something is coming to an end, and something else is about to begin and take root.

I would suggest that what is coming to an end is a way of being parish, with its ministries focused on the leadership of priests and sisters, school and rectory to a parish being re-shaped and transformed by the Mission given to the church 2,000 years ago by Christ, himself: "... go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

This Mission is the same today as it was so long ago; but times

have changed and how we reach out and evangelize must change, too.

The Spirit is leading the Church through a new door of women and men, priest, sister, lay leadership, the single, the married... all taking responsibility for this great Mission that Christ has entrusted to us. St. Teresa of Avila is slowly being transformed into a new way of being a parish. Yes, we need structures and institutions but they must reflect life in the 21st Century.

Hopefully, given our budget and the realities of construction, the space you are sitting on...the floor will become a huge shell. If you were to see the floor from our ceiling, without the pews, you would see the shape of a shell etched into the floor. Yes, we will be sitting within the shell of baptism...the shell of Mission, waiting for the liturgy to strengthen and nourish us so that we will be "poured out" into the world to make disciples of humanity.

We exist as a parish for the Mission...the Mission makes us who we are...the Mission creates the Church, not the other way around. Yes, a new door is opening. Next weekend we will celebrate the power that will make this happen: the Holy Spirit.