



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Show the Holy Spirit, not a worldly spirit at Mass this Pentecost

Earlier this week, I was saddened, even horrified, but not terribly surprised by the newscasts of Memorial Day celebrations around the country, showing parties packed together, with no one wearing masks, saying things like: “No biggie; you gotta die of something.”

I get it, people are tired of isolation; they want to be with others. And they need to get back to work, for their economic and social well-being. But they could still wear a mask and social distance, if not for fear that they might get sick and die, then for the sake of others, who are not as casual about their own health and life.

Those unmasked crowds of people packed together in one place are a picture of what the worldly spirit of “I, me and mine” looks like, when people only think of me, and not of thee, of other people, or even of God, saying things like: “I want what I want. What’s in it for me? This is mine!”

That’s different than the Holy Spirit, characterized by “we, you and ours.” So, I’d expect to see a different picture this weekend, when we once again gather for the public celebration of Mass. I would expect that, except that I know a worldly spirit can infiltrate the Body of Christ, the Church, through its members.

Even Catholics can be heard to say “I, me and mine” things, like: You can’t deny me my right to go to Holy Mass. Or, I have a right to receive Communion on the tongue. Or, the choice is mine whether or not to wear a mask.

I don’t expect the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit this Pentecost to be shown in flickers as of flame and noise like a strong and driving wind, or by ecstatic prayer that makes people think we’ve been drinking, or by speaking in many languages, or by God doing miracles of healing and conversion through us.

Instead, the Holy Spirit – given, says St. Paul, for some benefit to others – will be shown by Mass-goers washing their hands, wearing masks, practicing social distancing, and receiving the Sacred Host on the hand, for the sake of the health and safety of others, for the sake of the common good, for God's sake.

Archbishop Michael Jackels

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