

From the Desk of Our Associate Pastor ...



LUMEN AD REVELATIONEM GENTIUM **A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES**

The month of February has given us many opportunities to consider light, bees, and the life of Christ. The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, which is celebrated on February 2, is traditionally known as Candlemas. Simeon recognizes Jesus has come to set the world ablaze by fire! He comes to bring light to the darkness which does not comprehend light! Simeon saw the promised messiah would expend himself to bring light to the world. For this reason, the blessing of candles has always been associated with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. These same candles are, in turn, used the very next day for the blessing of throats for the Feast of Saint Blaise.

In recent days, there has been a request by many faithful of the parish to purchase votive candle stands for the piety of the Christian people of Saint Joseph's. After careful consideration and prayer, Father John has agreed to install two votive candle stands next to the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We hope they will instill a three-fold purpose in our people: 1) **piety to our Blessed Mother**, 2) **the sacramental consideration of candles**, 3) **the life of Christ**.

The Church has always given Mary the highest devotion, bestowing on her the titles of Mother of God, Tower of Ivory, Refuge of Sinners, Comfort of the Afflicted, and many more. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin is encouraged by the Church precisely because it is necessary to go back to her if we want to understand the truth about Jesus Christ, the truth about the Church, and the truth about humanity.

Candles are produced from the *"the work of bees and of your servants' hands"* (Easter Vigil – Exsultet). It is formed into a tall pillar, pleasing to the eyes and sturdy in touch. As the candle burns, it produces light, warmth, and even a certain smell. As it does so, the candle expends itself. The longer it burns, the smaller it gets - until it finally extinguishes when there is nothing left to give.

There are more than a few parallels we can see when considering candles and the life of Christ, especially as we move toward the season of Lent. Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, came to expend himself for the sanctification and reconciliation of the world. Through his own sacrifice on the Cross, Jesus became humble and obedient to the will of the Father, accepting even death on a Cross. Jesus is indeed the true light which enlightens every person in the world. May the use of candles in our Church and even in our homes remind us Christ came to scatter darkness, reveal sin, and reconcile us to God. May we always accept His invitation to His grace!

Father Armando Alejandro