

# *PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL*

## *May 2019 Newsletter & Calendar*

*Dear Parishioners,*

In 1544 St. Philip Neri, in the time of Pentecost, was imploring God in his prayers for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. As he was praying, a globe of fire appeared to him and entered his mouth and lodged in his breast. He was so filled with divine love that his heart actually expanded, breaking two ribs. The ribs eventually curved in the form of an arch, making room for his heart enlarged with divine love. (*Note: His body was examined after his death, and this miracle was verified by doctors.*)

As I reflect on this miracle of St. Philip Neri, and him being so profoundly filled with God's love, I reflect also on the profound love of God that manifested itself on our mission trip to Playa de Oro in Guatemala. For the 17 of us that went to Guatemala, each of us loved in some extent or another to the capacity in which we were able.

Now, I can't speak for the others, but as for me, sometimes my German personality, the fear of crossing some safe environment standard, and a little fear of intimacy all in some way keep me from loving with abandon. Maybe for some of the other men who had the talents of fixing wells and searching springs, their love was invested so much in behind the scenes service, that they in some ways missed out on a lot of that personal contact with the people of Playa de Oro, especially the children. Each of us has our story, but the most beautiful line I heard from one of the young women leaving, while shedding tears was, "My heart is so full."

It was her line, "my heart is so full", that made me think of Philip Neri. As I watched these young women serve and love with abandon these children of Playa de Oro, I don't think we could've stayed longer. Why? Because I would be afraid that their hearts would expand and the ribs near their heart would break. The beauty of this trip was that in all the areas that each of us worked, whether intimately with the children or people, or in the labor of fixing a well and repairing a roof, the Holy Spirit came in his great love, to each in the capacity we were able to receive. It also seems that the Holy Spirit is continuing in his great love to see this mission through.

In Eucharistic Prayer II, it says that the Holy Spirit comes like the dew fall. This is an image more gentle and subtle than the Pentecost image. It reminds me of the many people and the many ways this mission has been, and is, supported by so many.

On the eve before departing for Guatemala, the Social Concerns committee and the group departing for Guatemala hosted the first ever *Hunger Banquet* held at St. Michael. The evening raised about \$2,000, but even more, it raised the awareness of poverty globally, especially in Playa de Oro among the old and young alike.

Over 150 people attended, meaning about 20 people were treated with a gourmet meal, about 45 people had a simple bowl of stew, and 85 people sat on the floor with a simple bowl of rice. One mother told me after her 6<sup>th</sup> grade son attended and saw the reality of poverty in the world, "You got my son's mind working, he had lots of questions after leaving the banquet. Pretty Cool." Hopefully this inspires him and others to continue to ponder ideas and come up with solutions. This is an example the dew fall of the Holy Spirit falling subtly upon those participating.

Yet, the Holy Spirit continues to fall upon this mission. Countless people have donated eye glasses for the eye clinic, a doctor has stepped forward to travel with us in July, and so many people continue to support this mission financially and spiritually.

In this Season of Easter, let's continue to make an effort to pray for a continual Pentecost upon this mission, upon our new sister community of Playa de Oro, and upon us that we will continue to be guided by the light of the Holy Spirit.



*Come Holy Spirit  
fill the hearts of your faithful and  
enkindle in them the fire of your love!*



*~Fr. Tom*