

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Let me begin my first pastoral letter of the year with an imagined interchange.

- "I noticed four candles on the interior walls of the church. Why are they there?" Endre asks Klara, the representative of our welcoming committee, the "Isten Hozott Csoport". Endre, the enquiring young man, arrived from Hungary a few months ago, to try his fortune here. This takes place in the Saint Elizabeth hall under the church, after the main Sunday Mass.

- "They are there as reminders that these walls are sacred. Their places were anointed by the bishop with holy oil during the consecration of the church..."

- "But why are we celebrating this in March, when Cardinal Emmett Carter consecrated this new building on the 5th of October 1985, with the assistance of the first bishop of Hungarian emigrants, Bishop Laszlo Iranyi" -interrupts a self-important know-it-all.

- "We celebrate in March, because Archbishop McGuigan dedicated the first church of Hungarian Canadian Catholics in Toronto to God's care on March 19th, 1944. Thus, as we celebrate the Queen's birthday on Victoria day, independently of the reigning monarch's actual birth date, we celebrate..." continues Klara. She is well prepared. Her words are persuasive that this community is well worth joining.

How conscious are we that our words, our spirituality and our life are the keys to tomorrow? In 1928 Toronto's Hungarians did not have a priest or a church building when God's Spirit called them into a community. They accepted the call and accepted each other, even though they were neither faultless nor free of sin. From this cooperation, their belief in each other and in the future, a miracle was born. The consecrated walls, the love of the living God, the faith and work of our ancestors are guarding and preserving this miracle for us. However, our efforts, sacrifices and faith in each other remain the pillars on which the survival and growth of our faith community depend.

Many things can help us in properly preserving our beautiful heritage. Are you familiar with the ancient truth: "ecclesia semper reformanda" - the church is always in need of reform? While the physical structure must be regularly maintained and renovated, this is even more relevant to the spiritual church. Not only our own spirituality, but that of our community has a defining role in our family life, our close friendships, and all of our interactions. However, regular reform without real renewal inspired by God can turn from a blessing to a burden and a curse for ourselves and each other.

All of the current time of Lent is a time for rejoicing in renewal and repentance. There will be special opportunities for spiritual reform of our parish and our communities: the spiritual day of March 14, which is a novelty for our parish; the traditional "triduum" (three holy days) from March 18 to 20; the special spiritual activities of holy week from Palm Sunday to Easter, peaking with the Holy Three Days... We should take advantage of these opportunities. Let's participate with our family - if a couple or a family prays together, the Lord himself will guard the warmth of their homelife. We should also participate on these occasions with our established, and renewed parish groups.

The services to the parish community have been enriched by our web page and by our e-mail circulars. Consult them, as well as the Hírnök - our parish bulletin - as sources of information on the life of the parish. If we ensure that the parish lives by God for God, then none of our members will be lonely. Let us keep this truth in our minds and hearts when we will elect the representatives to our advisory council. Information on this, together with other events are attached. If you have any questions regarding tax receipts or any other matters, please contact us.

On the feast day of "Icebreaking" St. Matthias, in the 2009th year of our Lord, I ask our Good Master, the Friend of People, the Crucified and Resurrected Lord of all the Powers for his ample blessing on us all.

Fr. Szabolcs Sajgó S.J. Pastor