

*FESTIVAL OF PEOPLES, MAY 27TH 2007**

Don't call me a stranger – we are one in Christ the Lord



PART ONE

One of the most profound ways we can welcome diverse peoples into the Church is to include the cultural signs, symbols, music and languages of immigrants and other ethnic communities into our worship. It is important that newcomers have access to worship in their own language. However multicultural celebrations increase our understanding and promote unity. On the feast of Pentecost a celebration such as the 'Festival of Peoples' reminds the host Church that Christ has called us "from every tribe and tongue and peoples and nations", *Rom. 5: 9*

The recent Church Document *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi (EMCC)* provides us with many insights and guidelines as we enjoy the opportunities provided to us in the Care of Migrants. "We must also bear in mind that for many migrants it is a fundamental link with their church of origin and with their ways of understanding and living the faith. Here it is a question of putting into action an indepth work of evangelization and of enabling the local Catholic community to know and appreciate certain forms of devotion of migrants and thus to understand them. From this union of spirit a more participative liturgy can also be develop, one that is better integrated and spiritually richer.[Para. 46, *EMCC, Vatican 2004*]

* Published for the feast of Pentecost 2007 but may be used on another occasion as decided.

PART TWO CHURCH STATEMENTS ON MIGRATION

Papal Documents on Migration

World Migration Day 2006 Message (Pope Benedict XVI)

Speaking of the other category of migrants – asylum seekers and refugees – I wish to underline how the tendency is to stop at the question of their arrival while disregarding the reasons for which they left their native land. The Church sees this entire world of suffering and violence through the eyes of Jesus, who was moved with pity at the sight of the crowds wandering as sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mt 9:36). Hope, courage, love and "creativity in charity" (Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 50) must inspire the necessary human and Christian efforts made to help these brothers and sisters in their suffering. Their native Churches will demonstrate their concern by sending pastoral agents of the same language and culture, in a dialogue of charity with the particular Churches that welcome them. (October 18, 2005)

Angelus Message - June 19, 2005 (Pope Benedict XVI)

The courage to be a refugee lays the emphasis on the strength of spirit demanded of those who have to leave everything, sometimes even their family, to escape grave problems and dangers. The Christian Community feels close to all who are experiencing this painful condition; it endeavors to encourage them and in various ways shows them its interest and love, which is expressed in concrete gestures of solidarity so that everyone who is far from his/her own Country will feel the Church as a homeland where no one is a stranger.

World Migration Day 2005 Message (Pope John Paul II)

In our society, characterized by the global phenomenon of migration, individuals must seek the proper balance between respect for their own identity and recognition of that of others. Indeed, it is necessary to recognize the legitimate plurality of cultures present in a country, in harmony with the preservation of law and order, on which depend social peace and the freedom of citizens. (November 24, 2004, no. 3)

As such, Christians must above all listen to the cry for help that comes from a multitude of migrants and refugees, but they must then foster, with active commitment, prospects of hope that will herald the dawn of a more open and supportive society. It is up to them in the first place to make out God's

- working long hours and classes are not available at times when workers are free.
- Like the Irish experience of emigration, migrant workers generally develop an identification with the country in which they live in, while retaining a strong attachment to their country of origin.
- Irish society has undergone huge changes in the past 15 years. Only a part of this has to do with migration. Globalisation, communications, wealth, and international travel all shape how we define ourselves as a society

Taken from MRCI Publication – Challenging Myths and Misinformation about Migrant Workers and their Families

www.mrci.ie

presence in history, even when everything still seems to be enveloped in darkness. (November 24, 2004, no. 4)

Angelus Message – June 5, 2005 (Pope Benedict XVI)

I turn my thoughts to those who are far from their homeland and also often from their family, and I hope that on their way they will always meet friendly faces and welcoming hearts that can sustain them in the difficulties of daily life.

Statements of Pope John Paul II

Message for World Migration Day 2004

Migration with a View to Peace ...it is necessary to reaffirm vigorously that there can be no true peace without justice and respect for human rights. (December 15, 2003, No. 2)

Migration can in fact facilitate encounter and understanding between civilizations as well as between individuals and communities. The enriching dialogue between cultures... is an obligatory path to the building of a reconciled world. (December 15, 2003, No. 5)

When diversities converge and are integrated they start a friendly coexistence of differences. Values are rediscovered that are common to every culture, which unite rather than divide and have put down roots in the same human soil. ... Under these conditions, the phenomenon of migration helps foster the "dream" of a future of peace for all humanity. (December 15, 2003, No. 5)

World Migration Day 2003 Message

Being ever more deeply rooted in Christ, Christians must struggle to overcome any tendency to turn in on themselves, and learn to discern in people of other cultures the handiwork of God. Only genuine evangelical love will be strong enough to help communities pass from mere tolerance of others to real respect for their differences. Only Christ's redeeming grace can make us victorious in the daily challenge of turning from egoism to altruism, from fear to openness, from rejection to solidarity. (October 24, 2002, no. 4)

Church in Ireland

12TH APRIL 2007 – BISHOP SEAMUS HEGARTY

‘The Church is committed to people on the move. The latest Church document on migration *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* informs us that migration is not a passing event but rather a ‘structural phenomenon’ of today’s world. While the demand for workers increases across the globe, host countries should be mindful to both embrace what a person has to offer as well as to respect the dignity and wellbeing of that person.’

19TH MARCH 2007 BISHOP SEAMUS HEGARTY SIA MESSAGE 2007

Church is committed to people on the move - Bishop Hegarty

Bishop Hegarty said, “While a lot of emotion surrounds Irish emigration, we must be mindful that migration, in itself, is a structural phenomenon of today’s world. As the bishops and Irish Church mark 50 years of service to Irish emigrants in Britain, we must continue to rise to the challenge to be at the service of ‘people on the move’.”

Referring to the changing nature of migration in Ireland, Bishop Hegarty said: “the Bishops’ Commission for Emigrants is actively serving the needs of those who now travel to our shores. It is our conviction that policies or legislation that does not acknowledge the human dignity of the migrant will create untold problems for society into the future. Our challenge for today, therefore, is to build policies on firm foundations – policies which offer migrants and their families’ hope-filled futures. Such an approach should go hand-in-hand with the establishment of education policies and initiatives to support our local communities as they prepare to ‘welcome the stranger’.

29 JULY 2006 HOMILY FOR CROAGH PATRICK PILGRIMAGE 2006 BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM, DR MICHAEL NEARY

In these years of our land’s prosperity, men, women and children, like the Irish of old have had to leave their own native lands to come in search of work, peace and dignity. They too have found it hard to leave behind the hills of Kenya, the Niger Delta, the sacred soil of Poland and the Carpathian Mountains of Romania or even the war-torn, famine ravaged plains of their

there is no link and it is simply a fact that as Ireland’s population becomes more diverse this will be reflected in the profile of those causing accidents.

06 So ‘illegally’ resident Migrant Workers should be told to leave?

- There are no official numbers of those undocumented in Ireland. It is the MRCI’s experience that most migrant workers come here legally but become undocumented through no fault of their own, e.g. when an employer did not renew their Work Permit.
- Like many Irish emigrants who have found themselves undocumented in the US, undocumented migrant workers living in Ireland are simply trying to make a living and support their family, and they do not want to be undocumented.
- Many of those who become undocumented have also experienced workplace exploitation, which often involves being owed significant amounts of money in unpaid wages.

07 Are Migrant Workers not interested in being a part of Irish society?

- Sports clubs, churches and community associations all over Ireland are experiencing a new lease of life as migrant workers and their families participate and integrate into their local communities.
- Migrant workers often speak several languages, and given the opportunity would like to learn English. This can be difficult when

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Welfare is important for any worker as a safety net in times of illness or unemployment.

- Even when migrant workers pay social insurance they can find it hard to access social benefits. A rule called the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) was introduced in 2004. A person has to pass a test before qualifying for social welfare or benefit, e.g. have a work history in the state, and workers from outside the EU must be resident in Ireland for approximately two years.
- There can be pressure on public services when (e.g. teachers or language supports), or when waiting lists are already long (e.g. affordable housing lists). This results from public services not being able to keep up to date with the changing needs of the population and is not the fault of any one group.

05 What about Migrant Workers burdening our criminal justice system?

- Criminality exists in all communities. When media stories deliberately use a person's nationality or residency status it can give the impression that members of a particular group are more likely to commit crimes than others.
- 2,185 non-Irish nationals were committed to prison in 2005. Of these 40% were held under immigration related offences and awaiting deportation.
- It has been suggested that there is a link between road traffic offences and migrant workers. The Gardai have said publicly that

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country caught up in endless wars. They too know moments of homesickness, just as the Irish did in the Bronx or in the boarding houses of Camden Town.

As a Christian people we must cry out welcome again and again in parish and new community projects. It is lamentable to read and to see the abuse hurled at the stranger because they are different in language, culture and religion. We are a sad people if we think that the limits of human behaviour have been reached within our own borders or that the only songs are our songs and that the only culture is our culture. That line of thought would have put Patrick back to Britain again and left us to our Celtic pagan ways.

HOMILY GIVEN BY ARCHBISHOP DIARMUID MARTIN AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE PEOPLES HELD AT ST. MARY'S PRO CATHEDRAL ON SATURDAY 6TH JANUARY '07, THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

This morning's festive Mass is a sign of the efforts of the Catholic Church in Dublin to treasure and celebrate the richness of our new ethnic mixture in Ireland. The Catholic Church here in Dublin welcomes those who have come to our shores in recent years, wherever you trace your origins, for whatever length of time you will be here in Dublin. Whatever else may happen, know that you are welcome as full members of this local Church. Each one of us is a child of the same God. Each of us is created in God's image. We are all brothers and sisters, we all need each other, we all can support and strengthen each other.

The Feast of the Epiphany stresses that the mission and the message of Jesus is directed towards all. No one group, whether based on class or ethnic origin or cultural affinity can claim privilege within the family of God. If there is any fault-line it is one which favours sinners and those who are weak as opposed to those who feel themselves self-sufficient and arrogant.

This is not the vision of morbid entrapment in sinfulness and anxiety. The Church is God's family where all can find their home, their freedom, and where they can find joy in the fulfilment of their aspirations and hopes.

It is part of the Church's mission to denounce and to condemn anything that goes against the message of the Gospel about the unity of humankind. This is why the Church speaks about discrimination and exploitation against those who come to our shores; it speaks about latent racism; it speaks about fully respecting the rights, especially their labour rights, of migrants and their families. Immigrants are entitled to the same pay and to the same standards of safety and social protection as any other in our society.

Statement of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

The Love of Christ Towards Migrants – May 1, 2004 Vatican Instruction

In migrants the Church has always contemplated the image of Christ who said, “I was a stranger and you made me welcome” (Mt 25:35). Their condition is, therefore, a challenge to the faith and love of believers, who are called on to heal the evils caused by migration and discover the plan God pursues through it even when caused by obvious injustices. Migration brings together the manifold components of the human family and thus leads to the construction of an ever vaster and more varied society, almost a prolongation of that meeting of peoples and ethnic groups that, through the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, became ecclesial fraternity (no. 12).

For this reason the entire Church in the host country must feel concerned and engaged regarding immigrants. This means that local Churches must rethink pastoral care, programming it to help the faithful live their faith authentically in today’s new multicultural and pluri-religious context. With the help of social and pastoral workers, the local population should be made aware of the complex problems of migration and the need to oppose baseless suspicions and offensive prejudices against foreigners (no. 41).

- Of the 162,200 additional jobs created in the Irish economy from 2004 to 2006, non-Irish national entrepreneurs and companies accounted for 53% of these jobs.
- The majority of migrant workers are skilled and educated. This contributes to Ireland’s competitiveness and productivity levels.
- Non-EU students pay over double the fees of Irish and EU students. Non-EU students cannot access any social welfare benefits even if working.

03 Do Migrant Workers bring down wages?

- Wage levels including the minimum wage have consistently risen over the past decade.
- Migrant workers should not be blamed for employers who do not pay minimum wage and who violate employment legislation for their own profit.
- Migrant workers are involved in campaigning for fair pay and good standards of employment for all workers.

04 Are Migrant Workers a burden on public services?

- Migrant workers tend to pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits. It is estimated that around 200,000 migrant workers provide an annual surplus in income taxes of around half a billion Euro.
- Despite unfounded fears of ‘welfare tourism’, less than 1% of the country’s migrant workers are dependent on social welfare. Social

Challenging some myths about migrant workers

01 Do Migrant Workers take jobs from Irish people?

- There is always the possibility of displacement in a competitive economy but most available research shows that migrant workers replace rather than displace workers in Ireland.
- Ireland's unemployment rate is the lowest it has ever been (4.5%) and is one of the lowest in the EU.
- There are many reasons why it can be hard for unemployed people to find work ,e.g. lack of childcare and disability access, discrimination, racism, deskilling, educational disadvantage.
- 75% of companies report that they have difficulties in filling vacancies.
- FÁS estimates that 500,000 migrant workers will be needed over the next decade.

02 Are Migrant Workers a drain on the economy?

- Migrant workers expand the economy by allowing businesses to grow and by investing their own skills and money in enterprises.
- Migrant workers are vital for our health services and the hospitality sector, and many other parts of the Irish economy.
- They contribute both as tax payers and consumers of goods and services.

PART THREE TIPS FOR PLANNING MULTICULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

Promote full conscious and active participation of all groups in the Parish

- Identify unity in Christ in the midst of diversity
- The multicultural celebration is not a showcase for cultural difference

Use non-verbal elements

- Communicate through movement, procession, music, art and other visual elements
- Don't assume that the use of multiple languages in and of itself makes a celebration multicultural.

Celebrate Multiculturalism in the context of the Parish/Diocese mission.

- When lack of resources necessitates that cultural groups do not have regular access to services, do provide multicultural liturgies.
- Where there are liturgies in place in the language and tradition of an ethnic group do not put multicultural celebrations in place of them. ie. Do not arrange a multicultural event at a time when there is a regular mass in a specific language.
- Schedule multicultural celebrations in conjunction with feast days and special occasions such as Epiphany or Pentecost.
- Be aware of the cultural backgrounds from which parishioners come.
- Don't oversimplify the difference between cultural groups by lumping them together. What would an Irish person feel if they were told they were categorised as part of the British Isles? The Chinese are culturally different to the Vietnamese although both are Asian, just as Lithuanians are different from people from Poland, even though they are European.

Develop a multicultural Spirituality

- Help people be aware of how God is making his presence felt in the context of multiculturalism.

Guidelines of Multicultural Celebrations by Mark A. Francis, as adapted by USCCB

Develop a longer term perspective

- The preparation may focus on newcomers – be aware that many people from other countries may be members of our parish for a number of decades. They should feel welcome to participate in this celebration.



We in Ireland wish to acknowledge the wisdom and cooperation of Catholic Bishop's Conferences world wide. Having many years of experience ministering to immigrants they are always ready to share material, ideas and strategies with us. We particularly acknowledge the USCCB –Migrant and Refugee office and the ACBC.

IECE would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Sr. Mary O'Brien from the Catholic Communications Office, for her advice and support.

**Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants, May 2007.
Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Tel: 01-5053055,
Email: emigrants@iecon.ie**

Distribution of Communion

Ensure that as many of the cultures represented are ‘ministers of the Eucharist’. If there are few available it may be an opportunity to encourage and enlist involvement. Have the co-ordinators of the ministries available after mass to register people.

After Communion

A child representing each cultural group could exchange a gift with an Irish child of the same age.

The commentator can explain what each gift represents.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit – Reflection

Help us to be sensitive to the immigrant presence.
Allow us to see the immigrant as the face of Christ in our midst.

Inspire us to follow the call of Pentecost to embrace people of other countries, speaking other languages and bearers of other rich cultural traditions.

- While Ireland is mindful of its rich Catholic heritage we remember with regret the bloodshed over the years caused by lack of understanding and inequality.
- Many who came to our land also knew suffering; they hail from Nations mixed with martyrdom and persecution, yet remain committed to the God of peace, joy and love.
- Help us embrace the opportunity to create a new world based on the Kingdom of God.
- May we in Ireland grow in awareness of the great graces and religious qualities that are being brought to our shores.
- May we create the space that the other may emerge and difference be seen in all its richness.
- May we walk with one another as we integrate our lives deeply with that of Christ as we journey through the peace of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

PART FOUR

Don't call me a stranger – We are one in Christ the Lord



Don't call me a stranger

*Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart,*

*Don't call me a stranger;
The soil we step on is the same;
But mine is not "the promised land".*

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*Don't call me a stranger;
The color of my passport is different;
But the color of our blood is the same.*

*Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different,
But the feelings it expresses are the same.*

*Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat on our brows is the same.*

*Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separation that results is the same.*

*Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.*

*Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways
But our God is the same.*

**Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus,
Philippines, 1995 (Abridged version)**

In Ireland we say – we are not strangers only friends who haven't met. This liturgy is an opportunity to learn about one another as we make our pilgrimage to God the Father. We celebrate his gifts given through the power of His Spirit as we go forth to create a better world.

Remote Preparation:

In early May announce the following from the pulpit and place the Notice in the Newsletter.

“On Sunday the 27th of May at the _____ mass we will celebrate a ‘festival of Peoples’. On this day we celebrate the richness of our parish with its population of people from various countries, races and cultures.

We ask any of you who would like to represent you country to give your name to _____ after mass or you can email you name to _____.”

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We ask for the courage of the Spirit to speak out on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are exploited and oppressed by unjust structures, violence and warfare, so that their human dignity will be respected and their human rights are protected. Lord, hear us.....

We pray that those seeking a new life and safety in our country, that they may find welcoming hearts and support among us, as they adapt to the challenges of a new environment and new way of life. Lord, hear us...

We pray for our political leaders and legislators, that the transforming power of the Spirit will help them make decisions that create an inclusive and just society for all people. Lord, hear us

We thank God for the gift of communication at Pentecost and pray that we use this gift to help us embrace diversity and so build bridges of friendship, love and service in our local community. Lord, hear us.....

Conclusion

Spirit of God

Through the witness of our lives,
standing in solidarity with all peoples,
may we spread the warmth of your love,
the light of your wisdom,
and the fire of your justice,
so that all may live in peace and security. We make these and all our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen
(Sue Cooper)

Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts

The use of large or larger hosts signifies better “one bread, one body”. Consideration might be given to distributing Communion under both species.

Our Father

Everyone could be invited to pray the ‘Our Father’ in their mother tongue.

Sign of Peace

Members of Congregation could be invited to offer one another a sign of peace, using their first language and a traditional/cultural gesture.

'Solidarity... is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual because we are really responsible for all' [Sollicitudo Rei Socialis para 38.]

Today's theme "Don't call me a Stranger" is at the heart of this feast. There is no stranger among us today –we are one in Christ the Lord. To refer to those who gather with us today as strangers, tears at the heart of God. He desires that we unite in solidarity. When we allow race, religion and ethnic background become hurdles we need to turn to the Spirit of God to bring healing, wisdom and understanding to our communities. If the Apostles at the first Pentecost focused on difference, the message of the Risen Lord would have been lost to our world. The Spirit of God overcame difference and celebrated diversity on the first Pentecost. We are not here today solely to remember this great Feast but we gather to make it a reality in our world today. The Spirit moves powerfully among us as we commit to the vision of the Church presented at Pentecost. As at the first Pentecost let us listen to the power of God's Spirit, let us open our hearts to our shared mission; let us move as one in the service of God's Kingdom.

The task is immense. The task is beyond logic and challenges worldly ways. This sense of the purposeful Spirit hovering at Pentecost is captured in the poem Connections by Seamus Heaney telling us that the path of love leads us

'...slowly in the ceremonious air, to observe Irrational Redeeming Law'.

This irrational redeeming law helps us overcome rivalries, it allows us to see difference as an opportunity for mutual respect, it supports us as in our communal task of tasting the fruit of God's Kingdom and renewing the face of the earth.

Prayer of the Faithful

As well as the usual intentions, for example, for the Church, for those who have been baptised at Easter, the deceased and other needs, some of the following intentions may be added:

Intercessions

We place our prayer before God our Father

We ask that our church communicates the gospel by recognising and celebrating the rich diversity and giftedness of peoples and cultures among us. Lord, hear us.....

Task for Volunteers:

Identify two people to take part in the opening procession in the National Dress.

Prepare a group to sing one hymn or a part of the mass in their native language.

Source A1 size card poster for distribution.

Prepare a poster (provided) with information about your country of origin, Catholicism in your country, your religious faith, devotions and traditions. Highlight your national sports and cuisine. Give information regarding the number of people from your country in Ireland and any other details you consider appropriate. The poster will be displayed in the Church on the week of Pentecost and may be carried in the entrance procession. Please comment as to how you have been made feel at home in Ireland. If possible provide photograph and comment of the event.

Identify a child who will wear national dress that will exchange a gift with an Irish child of his/her own age. Please provide a gift that represents your religious culture or your own culture generally.

Please meet in the church on _____for a rehearsal.

Any questions, please contact _____.

PART 5

*Don't call me a stranger
We are one in Christ the Lord*

Procession:

Our Procession can include representatives of the different ethnic groups in the parish in national dress. They can carry the poster they have prepared and place it in a prominent space. A commentator can welcome each group represented.

Opening:

The stranger, by definition, is outside our community, set apart by different beliefs, customs and ways of speaking. The stranger can inspire fear. The biblical call to 'welcome the stranger' invites us to go beyond our mistrust and suspicion in order to welcome newcomers into our community. This feast of Pentecost highlights for us that we are one in Christ Jesus. On the first Pentecost Day people of different races and languages were united as one through the Holy Spirit. This highlighted the call of God from the beginning of time that we all shall be one.

"The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you"
Lev. 19:34.

Penitential Rite:

Lord Jesus, you strengthen us as we face our fears.

Lord Have Mercy

Lord Jesus, you guide us as we serve those who are vulnerable.

Christ Have Mercy

Lord Jesus, you direct us as we pursue equality and fairness

Lord Have Mercy

Readings

First Reading, Act 2: 1-11

This reading is a reversal of Babel where people were divided by language and pursuit of power. Today the entire community understood the message of the disciples in their own language through the power of the Spirit.

Second Reading, Romans 8: 8-18

We are united as one when we recognise we are God's children. The Spirit helps us overcome fear.

Gospel

The people from different nations and cultures are one in the Spirit celebrating the richness and joy of diverse gifts within God's Family.

Homily

Pentecost was an important feast in the Jewish calendar. It was celebrated fifty days after Passover. People from all over Palestine and beyond gathered in Jerusalem. The scripture texts highlight the multilingual nature of this festival by listing the various places that people travelled from. This festival was chosen by God to manifest the power of the Spirit and to highlight the universal mission of the Church. The power of the Spirit emphasizes this universal mission while reinforcing the duty of the individual follower of Christ to preach the Gospel and minister to her/his brothers and sisters. This was put most poignantly by Mother Teresa.

'By blood and origin I am Albanian.

My citizenship is Indian.

I am a Catholic nun.

As to my calling, I belong to the world.

As to my heart, I belong entirely to the heart of Christ.'

Pentecost weaves together our origin, our citizenship, our journey, our gifts and our mission into a tapestry of God's Pilgrim people who journey together in faith. Difference, diversity, even language are not to be barriers but mechanisms by which God's Love is announced. The Spirit unites our hearts to the heart of Christ as we minister to our broken world. This is the mission of the Church on this great feast of Pentecost. This mission is summed up in the word Solidarity.