# Mass of the Holy Spirit 2026

Our theme for this year is “made for more”, which perhaps inspires us to ask the question, “made by whom” and/or “more than what?” Well, as it often does, the New Testament provides us with first century answers to 21st century questions. In our first reading, St. Paul is writing to the young Christian community in the metropolitan port city of Corinth. And Paul, as a pastor to this community and many others in places like Corinth, Philippi and Ephesus, is explaining to these communities how they are to go about their lives, individually and collectively, as Messiah-people, Jesus-followers. Some of them are Jews, and many of them are Gentiles, and he has the task as their pastor to explain to them the mysteries of God and His Church, while also saying, “yes, this thing that you’re doing, keep it up!” or perhaps more commonly for Paul, “No, a bit less

of that or cut that out entirely." And he says to the Corinthians, "This is how someone should regard us…as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

For those of us who are steeped in the Scriptures on a daily basis, sometimes we can get so used the Apostle using language like this that it ceases to move us and we can read right over it. But we shouldn't. Paul is making quite a claim here. He is saying that we ourselves are the ones that God has chosen to use to go about the process of setting the world right again. What is the mystery of God? It is God working to put the world right again after the destructive impact of sin. What was the covenant to Abraham all about? Putting the world right again. What was Jesus coming out of the tomb on Easter Sunday about? Putting the world right again. What is the second coming and final judgment about? Putting the world right again. And God's

modus operandi that he shows us in the scriptures for doing that is using us, his creation, his divine image bearers and stewards of the created order, to participate in that with him, energized by his grace. And in this process of doing this, God wants to make us genuine humans, people alive with God's Spirit and in perfect unity with Him.

This is some of what Paul's letter to the Ephesians is about. From chapter one, "In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things…so that we might exist for the praise of his glory." Our theme for this year begins with the term "made", that is, created by our Creator. It's a statement of faith. Paul says in Ephesus that we are God's *poema*, in Greek, which is like a work, something which is made, but also can mean a kind of work of art. From which we get the word "poem". We are a kind of work

of art, a poem, a portrait, a song. We are the artistic work of the divine artist. And God wants his *poema* to reflect something of Himself to the world, but also to be signs of a new created order, like signposts that remind the world of the glory to which this all headed, in a world which sometimes still seems like it is governed by what Paul would call the evil powers and principalities, that is, in a world still afflicted by sin. We are to be countersigns, which reflect a different order. We are asked to be part of this putting to rights again of the brokenness of the world. That is what Paul is telling his communities. You were made for more than allowing violence to rule your lives. You were made for more than wrathful anger, debauchery, and malice. These all belong to the old order which is passing away. For the Corinthians, the Ephesians, and the Lancers of Kennedy Catholic, being made for more looks like being the stewards of the mysteries of a God who must look at the bitterness, the

division and the greed of the world, and say ‘no’ to it. So, when Paul says in Ephesians 4 to put away falsehood, to not sin with your anger, fury, shouting and malice, he’s not laying down arbitrary ground rules, he’s telling these young Jesus followers what it looks like when the people of God witnesses to the world around them what New Creation looks like. And it looks like *unity* and *holiness*. This can be very difficult. As anyone who has been involved in pastoral ministry and seen its successes and struggles can tell you, unity is much easier to have when no one cares about holiness (people can unify around all sorts of things which have nothing to do with God and His Kingdom and they can also unify around unholy activities, which is regrettably common), and holiness is easier when no one cares about unity (as if we are all just doing our own thing between us and God in our own little silos, not connected with anyone else). I think Paul recognized this too and that is why so many of his letters

coalesce around the themes of Paul railing against factionalism and warning of its dangers and also reminding these communities not to live in the old life they had before they learned of Christ, when their minds were darkened and they had been callous and hard of heart, “that is not how you learned Christ” he said, “You were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus, that you should put away the old self.” If we are going to live as a unified body witnessing to the world the love of the Lord, we are going to need the variety of different gifts that God has placed amongst us all pulling in the same direction which causes the world to take notice, and that is going to require us also being forgiving people, being kind people, being humble. These virtues protect our unity and help strengthen us in this task of reflecting God’s image back to the world. We do this in things like our Cuernavaca collection where we pool our resources to create something that makes a powerful difference, as well as

our Christmas toy drive, Agape, and more. We protect our unity to show the world the face of God. And we protect our holiness, where we look at those things in the world which do not belong to God, those things which can also find their way into this space at Kennedy Catholic, and we say no to them. We say no to gossip, we say no to deceit, no to belittlement, no to using others as objects. Because just like the Ephesians, that too is not how we were taught in Jesus.

Holiness and unity together. That is the path to putting on what Paul calls in Ephesians 4, "the new self, *created* in *God's* way in righteousness and holiness" (sounds like Genesis, doesn't it?). Made by God. Made for more. St. Paul would say, "Yes, precisely."