



April 11, 2010
The Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday

St. Anne
CATHOLIC
COMMUNITY

"...Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"—John 20:19

Dear Friends;

Christ is risen! Last Sunday we entered the season of Easter. Our Easter celebration concludes fifty days after Easter with the celebration of Pentecost. As a visual reminder of this we have two new tapestries as part of our Easter environment. One represents the Resurrection of our Lord; the other represents the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples.

Both these tapestries are reproduced from digitized images of the originals (in Museo del Prado, Madrid) by the master Painter Domenikos Theotocopoulos; know also as el Greco (b. 1541 in Candia, Crete; d. 1614 in Toledo, Spain.) He started off painting in the Greek icon style and later learned western European styles in Venice. Later he moved to Spain where he is known as the first genius of the Spanish School of Painting.

Both the Resurrection and the Pentecost paintings were a pair painted for the chapel in the Colegio de Doña Maria in Madrid (1596-1600.) They were probably located in the reredos (a screen or wall behind the altar of a church) the Resurrection on the left and the Pentecost on the right of a central painting of the crucifixion. The two paintings would have been located above paintings of the Nativity and Baptism correspondingly.

In the painting of the Resurrection Christ is shown in a blaze of glory, and he is walking on the air holding the banner that indicates his victory over death.

The soldiers who were placed to guard the tomb are scattering and falling over each other. Two hide their eyes from the radiance and two each hold up one hand acknowledging the supernatural importance of the event. Another soldier wearing a plumed helmet seems unaware of the event. He rests his head on his hand a traditional symbol of melancholy.

El Greco does not show us the tomb or landscape, and therefore takes the event out of the realm of history. He is articulating the universal significance of the event which transcends time. The other figures in many ways represent our various attitudes to the event from unawareness to profound recognition. The figures also reflect the light that is coming from the Christ and remind us to do the same.

The Pentecost painting continues the same kind of dynamism we find in the resurrection painting. The central image is of Mary—the God bearer, who was overshadowed by the Spirit in the Incarnation. She also is a figure that represents the Church. The apostles and other disciples are gathered around and their gestures represent the ecstatic and life-giving moment of the Spirit's descent in tongues of fire. It is also interesting to note that the apostle second from the right in the top row is a self-portrait of el Greco.

Both these paintings remind us that the Resurrection and Pentecost are not stories from distant past but present realities that we are invited to incarnate in our lives. As we proclaimed in the Easter Vigil all times and seasons belong to Christ, as do we.

Peace,

Ft. Ron