

Faith on Fire
The First Step
A Commitment to Personal and Communal Renewal

With this column, I am beginning a series entitled “Faith on Fire.” The purpose of this series is to suggest ways we can inaugurate the process of growing in faith so that our faith will be on fire with and devotion for Jesus Christ. I hope you will take time to read these columns in the months ahead and reflect on them.

How do we begin the process of stirring the flame of faith into a consuming fire that transforms the whole of our life? *We begin with a commitment to personal and communal renewal.* The key word here is “commitment.” We must commit ourselves to personal and communal renewal. Without a commitment to being renewed nothing will change; nothing will be transformed.

Why do we need to be committed to renewal? We need to be committed to renewal because once we allow the Spirit of God to renew us the Spirit of God will *change* us. Such change can be daunting, even frightening. And so we must commit ourselves to what the Spirit of God wants to do with us and our parish, even if we find it difficult.

Consider what might change in your own life, what has to change, if the Spirit of God renews you so that your faith is on fire with love and devotion for Christ. Renewal will mean deep and profound changes in your life, changes you may resist and struggle against. It will require a change in the way you live and interact with others and the world about you.

Consider what might happen to Saint Mary’s Parish if we allow the Spirit of God to renew us. We will be a very different community, a community with new priorities whose fire is on fire for the gospel. Are you ready for that? Are you committed to that?

Renewal is *God’s* work, and when we begin the process of renewal we never know where God will lead us or what God will require of us. That is why we must be committed to personal and communal renewal. We must decide in advance that we will allow the Spirit of living God change and transform us as God wills, not as we will.

Here is something practical you can do this week.

1. Set aside time for prayer and ask for the grace of renewal. Ask God to bring a deep conversion in your life so that your faith will be fire.
2. Ask yourself what has to change in your life and the life of Saint Mary’s Parish so that your faith and the faith of Saint Mary’s will be on fire.
3. Chose one thing to change and work on it. For example, pray more intensely. Read the Gospels. If you do this, you will begin the process of renewal that the Spirit of God will bring about you in your life.

Father Matera