

“Living the Mystery”

by Fr. Augie Gothman

Allow me to begin by calling your attention to our website: www.crookston.org. It has been recently completely renewed and revised. On pages of the Office of Liturgy/Worship (click the ‘Offices/Ministries’ link), **I call the attention those who are involved in music ministry and other liturgical ministries to the Music Planning Guide pages.** These are available to read online or print as desired.

Also, there are forms that can be completed online to save paper (or printed if need be), and links to all kinds of information. It is a prime means to connect us as the Church of Crookston.

Second, let me offer a reflection-prayer for the beginning of Lent.

This cross itches
on my forehead.
It is a reminder
of all the many places I have been
since I held a supple palm frond and waved it
singing, “*Hosanna to the Son of David!*”

It feels much more than a year ago--
the first bloom
of God’s tender springtime love.
It seems to have dried up even faster
than the frond I stuck behind the crucifix.

Faraway, too, seems the fresh-kindled
Paschal bonfire;
that roared to New Life
on Easter-eve.

Christ our Light!
A Pillar of Flame that burns to the honor of God.
How dim You seem
these long winter nights.

I want no small voice!
I long for earthquake, or
shattering spiritual wind!

Send out again
the Pentecostal fire,
that licked above the heads
of some fearful fisher-men.

And so in-flamed trembling
cowering hearts
to make them instead
fearless preachers of Good News.

I remember that Day,
but the fire has somehow gone
(though not from my memory);
like grainy black and white newsreel footage
tries to capture
a glorious technicolor afternoon.

That's why I brought my dried, brittle fronds
that they be consumed,
and that's why I pray for the three-fires' grace.

Ash Wednesday proclaims the fires have burned to cold ash.
Forty days of doing:
fasting, almsgiving, praying

New Easter fire forever interrupts the dark night.
Three days.
One (Paschal) Mystery:
living, dying, rising.

Spirit-Fire hovered over them in the Cenacle.
Fifty rejoicing days:
a 'Week' of weeks; plus one day more.
When the Spirit comes you will be my witnesses.
Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord!

So let these itchy ashes itch,
because the itching reminds me.

That we were all claimed for Christ by the Sign pressed on our forehead;
later each was signed with chrism, and sealed with the Holy Spirit's gift.
And we look forward to standing in glory
all chars and tears wiped away
and your bitter cross, Jesus glorified on our brow.