

20th May 2018 (Pentecost Sunday, Year B)

Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 103(104):1,24,29-31,34; Galatians 5:16-25; John 15:26-27,16:12-15.

The Spirit of Truth ... will be my witness!

Last Sunday we celebrated the Ascension of Jesus to the Father; after his life on earth he returned to the Father from where he came.

The Christian narrative is the account of God who wants to be involved in the life of men and women whom he created in his own image and likeness. In the Old Testament we see God communicating to his chosen people through the prophets. In the New Testament we see the Son of God taking on human form in Jesus. After Jesus' ascension to heaven, God the Holy Spirit comes on Pentecost Sunday to live with the Church and within us! The Holy Spirit is God within us!

In the book of Genesis we read that God breathed his breath of life into the nostrils of the first human being, giving him life (2:7). The breath of God is also his Spirit which God gives us, as he bestows on us his image and likeness. For us Christians, then, we receive the Holy Spirit in a special way when we are baptised and confirmed, and we are renewed in this Spirit each time we celebrate one of the sacraments.

God himself lives within us! St Paul reminds us that we are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in us (1Co 3:16). When I pray I go into my 'inner room,' in the silence of my heart, and meet God there (Mt 6:6). Thomas Merton wrote that as soon as one is really alone, then one is with God! (Thoughts on Solitude, 1956).

We are created to reach our fulfilment in God and are invited to live the life of God; not when we die, but here on earth. In today's gospel reading Jesus tells his disciples that the Spirit of Truth will lead us towards the complete Truth. We will not discover the whole Truth in this life, because this Truth is God himself. The Holy Spirit leads us on our journey of discipleship. The Holy Spirit assists us as we open our hearts to accept God's Word and celebrate together with the Body of Christ. This Spirit helps us grow in our faith and grow the life of God within us, and then we can be witnesses of the Word of God.

We do not witness of our own accord, because we are holy, or because we are special. We witness to the good news because the Spirit dwelling within us unites us to the Father. A few weeks ago we read the parable of the vine and the branches. In the parable Jesus invited us to stay connected in him so that we could have his life running in our veins and produce fruit. This Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth keeps us connected to Jesus.

As we celebrate Pentecost, let us allow the Spirit to continue to inspire us in our journey towards the Father. Let us continue to be inspired by God's Word and witness to the good news.

Fr Mario