

FR HUGH'S HOMILY FOR PENTECOST

Many of you might remember the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit we receive at Confirmation. Those making their Confirmation have been studying them and Mary Biddle has used explanations of each of them from an old catechetical book to explain each one. You may remember different explanations. It might be helpful to look at them again and the explanation given.

AWE AND WONDER: to help us appreciate the greatness of God in the world and people around us...

KNOWLEDGE: to help us to know ourselves and the world around us. To see the world as it really is...

REVERENCE: to help us to love God and each other as we should.

UNDERSTANDING: to help us to understand all that God has told us.

RIGHT JUDGEMENT: to help us to know what to do, especially in difficult situations...

WISDOM: helps us to see things as God wants us to see them.

COURAGE: to give us the strength to do what is right, no matter how hard this may be.

Just pause for a moment and see if any of these have come to you in your life. You might need to take a little more time to think of a situation, or more, when you used one or more of these gifts. It is highly likely that you never thought you were using one of them at the time, it is only with hindsight we see how God has been working with us.

Then let's imagine ourselves as one of the apostles hiding with Mary in that room on the day of Pentecost. Very few of them had much in the way of education. Many simple farmers. Dispirited over what has happened to Jesus and then being left behind by him, just a feeling of being deserted. While around them, outside, Jerusalem was full of pilgrims from all over the world known to them, who were there for the one of the three great feasts of the year, Pentecost, which is originally a Jewish feast.

Then comes the fire and the wind of the Holy Spirit. Frightening at first until they realise there is a purpose to it.

In a manner that would normally be completely beyond their capabilities they step, tremblingly at first, out into the city and they began to preach. At first possibly no-one notices until a large crowd gathers. And they preach with growing confidence, just starting to realise what Jesus asks of them and has equipped them to do.

There may be times in our lives when a radical change has come over us. Or possibly in quiet ways we have been able to do something that we would have thought beyond us, to step in and help where before we would have walked away.

One of mine was in a grotty pub or cafe in Ennerdale or nearby when a priest asked me if I was going to try the priesthood after all and I said, with some trepidation, 'Yes.'