

DEACON GEORGE'S HOMILY FOR SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

From the very beginning of time there has existed a threefold relationship, whom we know as the Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But now, there exists an additional threefold relationship - the Father, the Son, and YOU! This is because the third person of that relationship, the Holy Spirit, now lives in YOU. And because, the Holy Spirit is living in us, we are each in a threefold relationship with the Father and the Son. This relationship exists, and remains so, because of our Baptism, and Pentecost, and because we keep his commandments - love God and love our neighbour. But what is the purpose, of having this personal threefold relationship? It is because, Jesus does not want us to struggle through life on our own. He wants each one of us to have life to the full.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us that the world will not welcome the Holy Spirit, "**since it neither sees nor knows him**". Nevertheless, he tells us that the Spirit of God will be **in** the disciples even though so many people cannot recognise its presence. The only way **their** persecutors, and onlookers, will **see something** of the reality of the Spirit, is when they **see the courage**, and the **hope**, of the disciples, as they remain **steadfast** in witnessing to the Gospel.

Jesus makes it very clear, that the Spirit he promises will be given, not only to the disciples, but to all those who love him and keep his commandments. That Spirit, which will sustain the disciples through persecution and martyrdom, is the same Spirit which is given to all those who love Jesus. His promise of the Holy Spirit is extended to all of **us** who struggle in faith. And this is why we must pray for a renewal of the Spirit at Pentecost. Because it is only when people can **see us**, in **courage** and **hope, witnessing** to the Gospel, can they **see** the Holy Spirit.

But who is the Holy Spirit, really? Is he some sort of drug that can take us to such a high ... that we lose our inhibitions and fear nothing? Is he a prescription that keeps us going but without it, we fall apart? Is he a multi-vitamin that gives us spiritual muscle? **No!** But, on the other hand, I could **remind** you of all the mighty deeds and healings, manifested by the disciples, through the Holy Spirit, in the Acts of the Apostles. I could draw your attention to all 27 gifts of the Holy Spirit, referenced in the New Testament. I could explain why the English translations of the Greek word "**Parakletos**" are: Helper, Advocate, Counsellor, Comforter, but I won't.

So! who is the Holy Spirit, really? To me, he is that unique, but gentle **voice** within us. He is that **nudge** in the back, when we hesitate to do what the Lord is asking of us. He is that **cameraman** who presents us with thoughts and pictures, when we read Scripture or when we sit in silent prayer, such as, at Exposition. He is that gentle **movement**, who tugs at our heart strings, when we see or feel things that are not right. He is the **courage**, who enables us to speak words of comfort or the Good News, to people we meet. He is that **caution**, that reminds us, when we are going wrong. He is **all** of these and many more. But most important of all, He is Jesus' **gift** to us, so that we are **never** alone and we are **not** orphans.

The Holy Spirit will not gate-crash our heart. He waits to be received. So, when we think of all the wonderful things which the Holy Spirit can do, surely we will set apart some time, amidst our busy lives, to wait in silence and pray for his coming. And that is why we are called on by the Church, to pray **again** for a renewal in the Spirit at Pentecost.

Do you want to renew that three-fold relationship, with... the Father ... the Son ... and You. It is your decision.