

The Feast of Pentecost – Some Musings

“You also are to testify on My behalf.”

Fine and dandy for the Apostles who had walked with Jesus as He went about Galilee preaching the Good News of salvation; giving the people hope; curing the sick and even raising the dead. They had walked with Him and when the Holy Spirit came upon them they were filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, understanding, piety and fear of the Lord. Those gifts would strengthen them, help sustain them in times of persecution and trial, and keep their faith strong. But that was over two centuries ago! What about those of us living today in a world where many don't believe in God, where many are divided in their faith practice and where many are at odds with those of other faiths and beliefs? Yes. What about us?

How easy it is to ignore the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to us at our Confirmation. It was a lovely ceremony: We had been well prepared for it by teachers, parents and church leaders. People congratulated us, gave us gifts; rosaries, a crucifix for our very own, perhaps our own copy of the Bible. We had a party with family members. It was a lovely day. yet it seems we forget the most important gifts we were given: the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We were given the gifts that were given to His Apostles. What have we done with these oh so precious gifts? Many of us can still name them all, but how many of us have searched out what they mean in our lives? For many, we've put them on a shelf where they simply gather dust. I wonder what the Giver thinks of this.

In effect we're telling Him that His gifts are worthless to us. As we near the end of the Easter season, let's search out the ways in which we can implement the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I'm sure we'll be surprised at the effect they can have in our daily living. Think, for example, how we might that gift of wisdom as we interact with those who don't believe or who have fallen away from the faith; or using the gift of knowledge to deepen our own faith life and practice. When others come to us for advice, let's call on the gift of knowledge to assist them. In times of trial or temptation, we need to call on the gift of fortitude to strengthen our faith, our love, or our compassion.

To do these things with knowledge we need to seek ways to deepen what we know of our faith and put it into practice. That can mean that we do more spiritual reading and reading Scripture on a regular basis. Doing so can deepen our faith and as a result our piety, that ability to pray with fervour and devotion. And most of all we need to put into practice that gift of fear of the Lord. That does not mean to be frightened of His awesome power, but to love Him deeply with all our minds, all our hearts and all our souls and our neighbours as ourselves.

When Jesus said that He would be with us until the end of the age I think He meant us to use the gifts He's given, the gifts of His Holy Spirit and keep Him close to us at all times, allowing Him to walk with us, guide our steps and comfort us when we are fearful. He kept His promise to be with us by sending those gifts: We need to keep the promises we made at the time those gifts were bestowed on us at Confirmation.

We see His fidelity and love when we watch the seasons change, day move into night; let's make sure we are as faithful to our promises and when we fail let's take advantage of the gift of Reconciliation. He has not left us orphaned or without His help. Let's make sure we behave like obedient children.

Wishing you a week of many blessings and many small miracles.

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