



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 4th June 2017 - Pentecost Sunday

1 Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 4th June 2017 - The Gift of Peace (John 20:19-23)

In the evening of the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

At first sight this is a surprising gospel reading for Pentecost, but of course the event of Pentecost came too late to be a subject for the gospels, and we read the account of another incident where the Risen Christ gave the Spirit to his disciples. There are two emphases in the account. The first is peace. Christ brings peace to his disciples with the double greeting of peace, and peace is a Christian watchword. Peace was the song of the angels at Jesus' birth. Each of Paul's letters opens with a greeting of peace. The letter to the Ephesians proclaims that Christ is our peace, the removal of all worry, strife, envy, jealousy, self-seeking ambition. 'Go in peace' is Jesus' dismissal of those he cures, and also the dismissal at the end of Mass. Peace was Jesus' bequest to his disciples after the Last Supper. The second watchword is forgiveness, for God was always known as a God of mercy and forgiveness, as Jesus came to show by his constant approach to sinners. But the Lord's Prayer shows that if we do not ourselves forgive, we block God's forgiveness of ourselves too.

'Forgiveness is the only sure path to peace.' Does this cause any difficulties? Which is more important to you, peace or forgiveness? Or are they the same?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 4th June 2017



First Reading: *The Birth of the Church*

Acts 2:1-11

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech, Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language, They were amazed and astonished, 'Surely' they said 'all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome - Jews and proselytes alike - Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God.'

The ministry of Jesus starts with the coming of the Spirit at his Baptism, and so the ministry of the Church begins with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. There can be no witness to Jesus or to his message, no spreading of the Kingship of God, without the Spirit of Jesus. Another lesson from this parallel between Baptism and Pentecost is that the task of the Church and the life of the Church are the same as those of Jesus himself: to bring God's kingship to its fulfilment by bringing healing, love and joy through the message of the Risen Christ. The rushing wind and the tongues of fire are an allusion to the coming of God's Spirit upon Moses and the elders in the Old Testament. So the new message is the fulfilment of the Old Testament, breaking out beyond the borders of Judaism to include all peoples of the world. The union of all these peoples, all understanding one language in their own way, is a deliberate contrast to the scene at the Tower of Babel, when the Lord split up all the peoples of the world by their inability to understand one another's languages. The list of unpronounceable peoples is itself a witness to the universality of the Church!

How can the Church claim that, through its mission, the Spirit is at work in the world? Mention three outstanding ways in which the Church shows Christ at work today.

Second Reading: *The Body of Christ*

1 Corinthians 12:3-7. 12-13

No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

The slightest glance round a church full of people is enough to show the variety within the Christian community. But it needs the hints given us by Paul to remind us that every member of that community has his or her own special gift to contribute. Mercifully, these gifts are all different. It is valuable to reflect on the natural gifts that we find all around us. It is also valuable to reflect how dull, or even intolerable, life would be if I lived with a lot of clones of myself, all with the same gifts - and the same faults - as myself! Every one of us contributes something different and valuable in our own way, whether it is as the baby squeaking as a sign of new, developing life or the older person contributing wisdom, experience and even the suffering of Christ. The other inspiring thought is that all we varied and diverse people go to make up the Body, which is Christ. We all have experience of various corporate bodies, organisations and companies, but none of these other bodies makes up a person. Together we all make up that person who is Christ, since as Christians we all live and operate through Christ's Spirit.

Who is the most Christ-like figure for you in the present or recent past?

“Every one of us contributes something different and valuable in our own way.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
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