

Reflection for Saturday 7th Week of Easter 2020

When Jesus first meets his apostles, he calls them to follow him. Now, as he leaves them, he asks them to continue to follow him. Jesus also promised to send them the Holy Spirit to be their guide after his ascension into heaven. Jesus never asks anything of us without offering us the help we will need to fulfil our mission. But in fulfilling our mission Jesus also assured us that we would find the fulness of joy. Paul has already brought many, many people to Christ on his various missionary journeys. On arriving in Rome, Paul is given two more years to preach the word and bring even more people to Christ. Rest assured then that the Holy Spirit will help us in the same way, whatever may befall us, so that we too can fulfil the mission the Father has given us. **During the lockdown** the Food Bank has had to give out supermarket vouchers because of the lack of food stock. A Group known as the Nirankari Foundation, who originated in India and who meet weekly here in Hitchin, had a collection and bought in mountains of food for the foodbank this week and want to help more in the future. God certainly looks after those who seek to good for others. One day I hope that you can all meet them for they live among us as a sign of God's blessing; just as St Paul was a sign of God's blessing in Rome.

As we come to the close of the Acts of the Apostles and the Gospel of St John, it opens the door to a new beginning rather than a closure of what went on before. Already the lockdown is becoming less severe and there is hope that churches will be open for prayer in the not too distant future. Small steps, yes, but our prayers are being answered. May our faith be strengthened by the experiences we have been through and those we still have to face. As we move forward, God's blessing will be with us as will the Holy Spirit. And like the Nirankari Foundation, St Paul and the Apostles, we, too, will be a blessing wherever we go! Reflect on the words of this song:

Holy Spirit of fire,
flame everlasting, so bright and clear,
speak this day in our hearts.
Lighten our darkness and purge us of fear,
Holy Spirit of fire.

Holy Spirit of love,
strong are the faithful who trust your pow'r.
Love who conquers our will,
teach us the words of the gospel of peace,
Holy Spirit of love.

Holy Spirit of God,
flame everlasting, so bright and clear,
spark this day in our hearts.
Lighten our darkness and purge us of fear,
Holy Spirit of God.

One day a man went to an auction. When an exotic parrot went on the auction block, the man decided he was going to buy it, no matter what. He wanted the bird so badly, he didn't think twice about the anonymous bidder who was outbidding him – he just kept bidding, and getting outbid, and bidding higher and higher until he finally won the bird at a price that anyone would call a rip-off. Despite his disappointment about the price, the beautiful bird was his at last! As he was paying for the parrot, he said to the auctioneer, "I sure hope this parrot can talk. I would hate to have paid so much for it, only to discover that he can't speak!"

“Oh, don’t you worry,” said the Auctioneer. “He’s a talker all right. **Who do you think kept bidding against you?**”