

Awaiting the Spirit

Generation after generation, the gifts of the Spirit continue to be poured out upon us. In today's gospel, Jesus speaks to us about the Advocate who is to come as gift, for us to receive in openness and thankfulness. It is the Spirit who will animate us to keep the commands of Jesus, so that we will continue to undertake the tasks which we have been called by him to perform. These are the tasks which are handed on from one generation to the next, tasks which keep the flame of faith alive and active in our community.

The living faith which we have received from our parents, has come to us from many previous passings on. This passing on, is the very life blood which flows through our veins and teaches us the truth which comes from the words of Jesus. It makes its presence felt in the structures which form and nurture our families, our communities and our parish. We experience it and see it at work in the lives of those around us, as the gospel makes this truth visible and tangible.

The manifestation of the Spirit and its animating strength will never stop, but we live in the reality of a physical world where the passing on of the faith depends on our openness to accepting the tasks and charisms towards which the Spirit prompts us in due time. There is much to do in our parish, and we have for many years, been blessed with dedicated and loyal servants who, much to their credit, continue to provide generous and loving service. However, limbs grow weary and the work becomes a little more onerous. So, as we await the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, let us all open our hearts to receive that Spirit of God's love and generosity, and let us consider through our prayer, what we each can offer individually so as to keep the gifts we have received alive and at work in our parish, so that they are indeed passed on. St Paul reminds us that there is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit, there is all sorts of service to be done but always to the same Lord, working in all sorts different ways in different people. So could I offer myself as a catechist? Could I offer to help clean the Church or help with the flower arranging? Or could I help with cleaning the linen and the cloths for the liturgies. Let us not be bashful. If you feel the Spirit calling you towards a liturgical task, such as an altar server or a reader, a welcomer, or an extraordinary minister of communion, then please come forward and share your gifts. The message which an active and vibrant parish community manifests is a powerful one. People see in it an expression of the belief that sits at its heart, demonstrating that the love of God and the fellowship of the Spirit resonate through what goes on.

It is clear that the Spirit continues to call us and we must be ready to respond. In his encounter with Nicodemus Jesus said: *The wind blows wherever it pleases, you hear its sound but cannot tell from where it comes or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit.* Let us pray that we recognise the Spirit's presence in our lives, prompting and guiding us to take on the responsibilities necessary to ensure that in our parish, we are able to carry forward our faith in and through the life of our parish, so that it is both received and passed on in love and generosity of heart.