

Pentecost (C)

We are sometimes stirred when we see on the Telly a well-known deceased person making a speech when they were still with us. The person may be dead for years but their words 'bring them alive', as it were'. (An example might be Martin Luther King and his 'I have a dream' speech in 1968 shortly before he was assassinated). His dream was realised years later.

Well, it's the Holy Spirit who brings alive the words of Jesus and make them relevant for us today. The last words of today's gospel spells this out: *'the Holy Spirit will remind you of all I have said to you'*. The Spirit will enable us to hear afresh the teachings of Jesus and be nourished spiritually by them in our present life situation.

I know in everyday life we all like buying new things, new clothes, new houses, new cars, new shoes, but we need spiritual renewal as well if we're ever going to be live meaningful lives in this world. People who keep the Holy Spirit at bay neglect the spiritual side of their nature. St Paul says in the second reading that *'people who are interested only in unspiritual things can never be pleasing to God'*. Where do we stand in all of this?

We all know from psychiatrists that repressing anything spells trouble mentally and emotionally. Some years ago the previous Pope, Benedict said: *'today we've repressed the sense of God and of the transcendent. He goes on: 'The entire realm of religion, faith and God, the domain of spirituality, is banished from everyday life or marginalised. Our spiritual side has been repressed. This is the new neurosis of our time – this is our deep wound. The neurosis of our times is our silence regarding God'*, the previous pope said. But the Holy Spirit will help us break through that wall of silence if we let him and breathe new life into our souls. In the Pentecost hymn we sing: "breathe on

me breath of God and fill me with life anew". Do we really mean these words?

Pope Francis said last year, *"I need the constant outpouring of the Holy Spirit if my spiritual life is not to stagnate"*. Stagnation runs alongside sin – they are bedfellows. We could get stuck in the rut of sin, big or small. For instance we can be so used to swearing that it becomes part and parcel of who we are, embedded in our soul, part of our personality, but not a very nice part. We could become so used to lying, telling half-truths, exaggerating stories, it becomes second nature to us. But the Holy Spirit keeps prompting us to change.

On a wider more general scale one spiritual writer puts it like this. *Without the Holy Spirit, God tends to be distant. Christ stays in the past. The Gospel is a dead letter. The Church is another institution furthering its own ends. Attendance at Mass becomes wearisome. Morality is reduced to a slavish adherence to rules and regulations.*

But with the Holy spirit God is near, Christ is in the present, the gospel is alive and challenging. The church is a faith-filled community. With the Holy Spirit, morality is inner transformation not outwardly keeping rules. With the Holy Spirit inner peace can be had even in the midst of turmoil.

<p><i>Bearing this in mind we pray: 'Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your divine love. Breathe on me breath of God and fill me with life anew'.</i></p>
