

*The Homily today is from Fr David Purcell*

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be now and always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen*

Today I want to talk about the Holy Spirit and the impact He has on our lives as Christians.

In last week's Gospel reading Jesus said to his disciples, "*In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me, and because I am going to the Father*".

Jesus warned them about the difficulties they would face once he left, and that their sorrow would turn to joy. He used the example of a woman enduring childbirth, and the joy after the birth of her child. He said; "*Now is your time for grief, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*".

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus continues along the same vein: "*Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father.*"

Jesus had been mentoring his disciples for the three years of his ministry, and they would have learned much during this time. They bore witness to many of the miracles He performed in their presence, and now He has told them that he must go to his Father. Put yourself in their position...what emotions were they going through? Grief, uncertainty, sorrow or loss? Jesus picks this up and highlights their self-centredness "*none of you ask me, 'Where are you going? Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things'*". They failed to see past their current dilemma and visualise the bigger picture of what Jesus was about to accomplish through his departure.

Jesus was preparing His disciples for the events that were about to unfold over the ensuing days, events that would transform their lives from a group of disciples who had been huddling behind closed doors out of fear, into bold missionaries, proclaiming their faith in the Risen Christ.

Prior to being filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they were worldly minded. Once they received the Spirit, they became spiritually minded and were "blessed" with the mind of Christ. Before Pentecost, they were motivated by that self-centred desire to occupy lofty positions of power in the kingdom; after Pentecost, their mind-set was changed and they were now concerned with carrying out Christ's Great Commission.

The "Gift" of the Holy Spirit, is available to us all today, just as it was in the days of the disciples, and it is up to us whether we accept this "life changing" gift or not, for the Spirit to be our Advocate, our Comforter, our Intercessor and Mediator.

A story comes to mind of a person, "The Accused" who arrived at the courtroom and informed the judge that he would be representing himself...to which the judge replied: "*May I warn you, sir, that the man who defends himself has a fool for a lawyer.*" ...the moral of the story is that when you are in a tight spot, you need the help of an Advocate to plead your case.

The Greek word "Parakletos" translated means Advocate or Helper. It means someone who is summoned, or called to one's side in order to help. It is a counsel for defence, a legal assistant, an advocate, an intercessor.

*What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life?*

When we accepted Christ as our Saviour, we were "born again". There were new things to learn, and things to unlearn; habits to form and habits to break. We became a new creation, much like a baby in many ways. We first had to learn to crawl and then we learnt how to walk. We quickly learned that we can't change things on our own, and that we need God's help.

That is where the Holy Spirit comes in!

John 16:13 *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

It is the work of Holy Spirit that will produce a Christ-like character in you. And God wants you to grow in faith, and the Bible calls it the "Fruit of the Spirit".

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)*

The Holy Spirit also convicts us of our sin. He draws our attention to the Laws of God. The Holy Spirit brings us to our knees in repentance, and most importantly, we know that the Holy Spirit is working when we make the good confession of Faith.

God wants us to grow and become fruitful, but we also have a role to play to become bearers of good fruit. We need to listen and obey the Holy Spirit when spoken to and obediently follow His promptings in our lives. Christians throughout the world are preparing themselves for two great events; The Feast of the Ascension and the Feast of Pentecost. Both have enormous significance for us as believers, and both challenge our level of faith and obedience.

It is my prayer that as the Disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, the same may be so for you, and that you will be open to His intervention in your life, for your benefit, and the benefit of the whole church.

*In the Name + of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen*

