



Sunday Reflection Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 5 June 2022

Pentecost

On this day of Pentecost, we rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit promised to us by Jesus and sent to us by the Father. Together we can share in God's loving work.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever." John 14:16

An Illustration to set the scene

If you've been to a large gathering of people, particularly in a sports stadium, you may have experienced or been part of a Mexican wave.

It's quite something to see, as a ripple moves around the crowd.

A wave in the sea has more in common with a Mexican wave than you might imagine.

Although it looks as though the individual water molecules are moving, in fact they stay where they are, in the same way that an individual stays in their seat in the stadium, and the energy is transferred from molecule to molecule.

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

The Bible's first mention of God's Spirit goes right back to "the beginning", when the Spirit moved on the waters like the wind, stirring up an enormous, powerful wave.

It's a story familiar to many people, as is today's Gospel reading – the story of the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples like fire and wind – both powerful sources of energy.

In today's Gospel, Jesus promises to ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with us always.

Jesus predicts that people will believe because of the works he has done, and also the works that his followers will do.

So we're expected not to sleep on the job! Rather, the Holy Spirit will give us power to achieve more than we could on our own – God's power.

God, who created fire, wind and waves, will energise us to tell others of God's love, in ways they can understand.

Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as "another Advocate" – because of course we already have one in Jesus himself.

In a familiar introduction to confession, Jesus is "our Advocate in heaven".

The Holy Spirit is our advocate on earth.

Advocate, meaning someone who helps us, stands alongside us, a bit like the person next to us in a Mexican wave, giving us the confidence to get up when it's our turn.

Someone has to start that wave, just as the wind starts the waves at sea, and Christians believe that initial power comes to us through God's Spirit, sent from the Father and Son.

In our reading from John's Gospel, what Philip fails to see is that Father and Son are always working together to do the works of God.

The miracle of Pentecost is that we too can be part of that. We can do God's work and in turn help others to believe in the Father, who is in the Son, and the Son who is in the Father, and who, together, send us the power of their Holy Spirit.

All Jesus asks of us is that we love him and show it by keeping his commandments.

He had already summed up the commandments in the familiar two: love God with all your heart, and your neighbour as yourself.

And he also gave us a new commandment: **“Love one another as I have loved you.”**

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

Each service of Holy Communion reminds us vividly of just how much Jesus loves his disciples – he laid down his life for us.

Love isn't just a word, but an action.

If we're prepared to accept it, the Holy Spirit brings the love of the Father and Son to us, opening our hearts to receive that love, that power, and then channelling it through us out into the world, to our neighbours, the people we bump into.

In the sea, the waves go up and down where they are, bumping into each other, and the energy gets transferred.

With that initial injection of energy from the Holy Spirit, whatever we do in the place where we are can be part of something much bigger, something powerful.

That “something” is the universal Church of Christ, energised by the Spirit and doing God's work in loving service of our fellow human beings.

When we work together, sharing the love of God so vividly illustrated in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, others understand and believe, and they also begin to do God's work.

The wave continues.

What can we do, in the place where we are, to help that happen?

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.” John 14:16

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