



Sunday 20 May 2018 – Pentecost
Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Readings: The Acts of the Apostles 2: 1-12 The Gospel of John 15: 26-27, 16 4b-15
Focusing on The power and love of the Holy Spirit
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

If you listened to the Assisted Dying debate in the States last week there were forceful arguments expressed on both sides, some compelling, some not. Having heard the reading from Acts a few moments ago, one thing is certain if St Peter had not been compelling when he addressed the massed crowds in Jerusalem, no one would have paid him any attention at all. But, filled with the Holy Spirit, the crowd hung on Peter's every word.

It is difficult to try and grasp the concept of God as Spirit. Jesus we can imagine readily because he shared our flesh and blood but how do we associate with an apparent intangible? I think the Gospel gives us an indirect answer when Jesus says "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf."

As fallible people it is a great comfort that we have a divine Advocate to speak for us and instruct us. I think it is unnecessary to delve too academically and theologically into the various aspects of the Holy Spirit, for what we really want to know is what motivates God to give us his Spirit? And, how does the gift of the Holy Spirit manifest himself within our lives? Let's look at the effect the Holy Spirit had on Peter.

He was compelling to listen to because the gift and power of the Holy Spirit is the gift and power of God's love, which he gives to us all freely. After Peter's abject grief over his desertion of Jesus and in the light of the resurrection, Peter was transformed knowing that he was forgiven and loved by God. It was the power and love of God to transform lives that captured the crowd's attention.

Not everyone wants to stand up in public and address a large crowd, so how do we know that we too are filled with the Holy Spirit and doing God's work? Here in Church this morning we have all the evidence we need. Everyone who has prepared so lovingly for this service from the altar requisites, to the meeting and greeting at the door to the music. All is made ready for us to come and receive in communion with Christ, his Spirit and the love of God the Father. Further, you have all come to worship, if you didn't love God you wouldn't be here as faithful witnesses. And hopefully, the priest too projects the love of God and not her own ego.

As we know the assisted dying proposals were lost in the States and the vociferous comments of campaigners, both for and against, are starting to subside. One of the gems that came out of the debate was the comment from one deputy that if we seek

rights with that comes responsibility. How true! Benchmarks of the Holy Spirit working through the debate were the voices of those who spoke with selfless love. So, what is our ongoing responsibility? If we seek the right to call ourselves Christians, then we have a responsibility to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit wisely, for the good of all God's people. As members of the Church through baptism, it is good and right that we should come here and worship God caringly, lovingly and reverently in the building that draws us to him. Our responsibility for that right is always to find ways of conveying the love of God beyond the walls of this building.

When the power of the Holy Spirit endures in our lives, his gifts will be reflected in the actions we undertake for the benefit of others and these confirm that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, not loudly but lovingly.

Amen.