

ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

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Newness and Mission

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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The truths of the Catholic Church cannot alter and cannot change. The Gospel was and is the revealed word of God and it is this that we must learn to live out day by day with as much joy and charity as we can muster, always in union with the working of the Holy Trinity working in us and in the Church. But this is not to say that there have not been many changes in the way that the Church is both organised and the way that it lives out this Mission. Indeed we only have to look at the many liturgical observances to notice this. But the Holy Spirit cannot and does not abandon His Bride the Church. He works in many ways to make the Will of the Father manifest right down through the ages and through individual people as well as the collective mind of the Church.

This movement of the Holy Spirit is particularly evident in the many groups, Communities and individual calls to service that have flourished through the ages. Brothers, Sisters, groups of Priests and Lay Associations have found ways to serve the Church and the Society in which they live. It is vitally important that each person respond to this service in their particular way and in the context of their own lives. We have only to look at the founding of the main religious communities such as Franciscans, Dominicans Jesuits, Carmelites and Benedictines who then gave growth to so many other communities, some of them 'Third orders for lay people' to be aware of the importance of the response to the grace of the moment.

In June we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi the Body of Christ. Yes, we are all part of that Body and each one of us has a vital role to play in the up building of the Church. We receive Jesus in order to solidify our faith and commitment to that end and we are strengthened by the Holy Spirit in order to manifest God's love to each other and all people. Communion means just that; we become part of the Community of God's love and we bear the marks of the membership through Baptism. Being weak and fragile we are strengthened by receiving Jesus to enable us to persevere in our Mission to bring Good News to all people.

Contd...

"What we need is more people who specialise in the impossible"
-anon.

How we bring that Good News to mankind is vitally important and because times and seasons change the Spirit is always renewing us and showing us different ways to bring this service to others. It would have been unthinkable even fifty years or so ago to be able to produce this sheet and for it to go all over the world in a matter of minutes! Equally travel is faster.

In this Continuing Year of Faith we are being asked to reappraise our commitment to not only live out the Gospel but to share it. There are many ways of doing this and many different Apostolates that allow this work to continue. Our deep faith is made manifest to others through the works of Charity such as the corporate works of mercy such as feeding the poor providing clothing, visiting the sick, imprisoned and through the spiritual works of mercy such as instructing others in matters of faith, encouraging others and supporting the doubtful and many other ways. In many ways these two forms cannot be separated and indeed there is a way, in which they have been over time, and need to be brought together in our hearts. Can anything be achieved without prayer? If you feed someone but do not manifest Jesus to them are you only giving them half the Truth of love?

We are all familiar with the many ways that have flourished in the past. Groups such as The St Vincent de Paul Society, the Legion of Mary, the Little Way Association and the various Sodalities have done and are doing this work which were especially founded for and by lay people.



A VISION OF HOPE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY!

The Holy Spirit has moved powerfully in the Church in the last Century to give birth to many, many more such groups and movements. Each one is unique and carries out their Apostolate in a different way. Many of these *ecclesial groups* are made up of lay men and women and often priest and religious working in harmony with each other each reflecting their special gifts and Charisms. It would be impossible to mention all of them here. Indeed 120,000 member representatives of various groups gathered in St Peter's Square at Pentecost at Pope Francis's request.

Some of these groups form communities of lay people and priests such as The Society of Our Lady of The Most Holy Trinity, or the Madonna House Community, The Beatitudes or Emmaus Group. Others specialise in their call such as the L'Arche Communities who live with people as brothers and sisters who have some disabilities. There is also the Foyers of Charity who were founded to lead silent retreats for Lay people. There are also Movements in the Church that have given guidance and inspiration to thousands such as The Fokolare movement, Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the more recent Saint Egidio which encourages young people and young adults to Evangelise in the cities, which they do in their unique way and very successfully. The Faustinum, is also an umbrella group for hundreds of smaller Apostolates of different types which are worldwide. Not of course forgetting those fighting for 'Justice and Peace' and such as Cafod.

All these groups manifest the reality of working together as Church in Communion with each other. The Holy Spirit is alive and active in the Church.

At Pentecost when speaking to the invited members of these groups in St Peter's Square and after a vigil of prayer to encourage and thank them all for their dedication he asked them in his Homily at Mass to reflect on these word.

In the light of the passage from Acts 1 (The descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles) I would like to reflect on three words linked to the working of the Holy Spirit: newness, harmony and mission.

He spoke many inspiring word on these themes but concluded with these words:

The Holy Spirit makes us look to the horizon and drive us to the very outskirts of existence in order to proclaim life in Jesus Christ. Let us ask ourselves: do we tend to stay closed in on ourselves, on our group, or do we let the Holy Spirit open us to Mission let us remember newness harmony and mission!

19th May 2013, Pentecost

Now some of the Communities that are mentioned have bases in Britain; do you know about them...? Do you feel that you could do more and have an idea, react to it, seek guidance and pray about it? As did Jesus, Pope Francis tells us 'not to be afraid'.

The history of the Church is full of new initiatives from the very start of the Church all was by definition new and certainly for the Apostles. Terrified to venture out, filled with the Spirit they went everywhere and probably surprised themselves all the way. The Holy Spirit will instruct us as He said He has and will do so. So be bold..!

Has the breath of newness been your gift this Pentecost? Are you willing to be inspired in the weeks and years to come by His grace? The Year of Faith continues and you have a part to play.



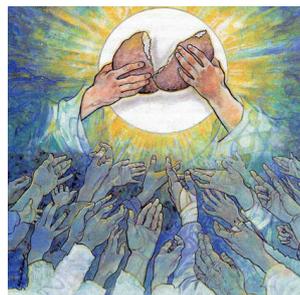
The words of Pope Francis 1 should inspire us to react as did the Apostles with faith.....

Dear brothers and sisters,

We need to allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by the light of the Holy Spirit, so that He may bring us into the Truth of God, who is the only Spirit, who is the only Lord of our lives. In this Year of Faith let us ask ourselves if we have taken any concrete steps to know more about Christ and the truth of the faith, by reading and meditating on the Scripture, studying the Catechism, approaching the Sacraments with constancy. But let us ask ourselves at the same time, what steps are we taking so that faith may guide all our existence. One isn't a Christian 'part-time', at a certain moment, in certain circumstances, in some choices. One cannot be a Christian like this. One is a Christian at all times! Totally! The truth of Christ, which the Holy Spirit teaches us and gives us, forever and totally affects our daily lives. Let us invoke Him more often so that He may guide us on the road of the Disciples of Christ. Let us invoke Him every day.

I make this proposal to you. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit every day, thus the Holy Spirit will draw us closer to Jesus. Thank you! May 2013.

...Words to ponder and pray about.



This month's Special Feasts
Corpus Christi, The Feast of the Sacred Heart
and Saints Peter and Paul.

Pray too for all new works of the Spirit and all Apostolates. May The Holy Trinity guide the Church to work in harmony and guide and bless all Bishops and Priests.



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