

## Reflection from Fr. Colm on Pentecost Sunday

*Audio posted to the Parish Website on Sunday 31st May 2020*

Today is Pentecost Sunday the birth of our Church. "Receive the Holy Spirit," said Christ. This word means "breath" nothing to do with being aggressive or being hard. St Peter tells us in his first letter that it is the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That spirit is not only something we need for self-understanding but for understanding each other and understanding God. It's that spirit that breaks through the outer barriers of all those terms that we use all too often today. Generalisations and sweeping dismissals, even of a whole community of people and this is at a time when we have never had easier access to understand each other via social media.

George Bernard Shaw famously said, "*The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.*" We see the truth of this played out before our eyes as leaders scramble to clarify confused past communications. The catchy political slogan becomes the norm and what of the incredible changes indeed that are taking place with Zoom and Teams? Face to face meetings will no longer be the norm. We hear stories of both positive and negative aspects to these massive changes. All is to do with communication and understanding and indeed they have been a real gift to families in isolation. Another method of communication. One other recurring happening made by so many in this lockdown has been the new awareness of others communicating in a decent, friendly, caring, and kindly manner. Even nature is gently communicating and reminding us that it has always been present, but we just didn't take the time to listen and to look. How often have you heard, as I have, people say "*Listen, do you hear the birdsong?*"

Yes, the Spirit is now speaking powerfully to us in that same gentle breeze. It is that we are forced now perhaps to listen more. These are ways indeed of God's communicating presence in these often confused and uncertain times that we now live in.

And so, let me sum up with the lovely words of the American Carmelite Sister Jessica Power "*That was the day when Fire came down from heaven, inaugurating the first spring of love. Blood melted in the frozen veins, and even the least bird sang in the mind's inmost grove.*" Good morning.