



8.30am Holy Communion

Sunday after Ascension - Day 2021

In the modern RC Eucharist instead of 'Go in the peace of Christ' at the end of Mass, one option is to say 'Go in peace, glorifying God by your life'. I love that. 'Go in peace, glorifying God by your life'. I pray that that be the case for each and every one of us as we leave the altar of God every Sunday morning of our earthly lives. We come here to end and begin each week by reconnecting with God in the Sacrament of Jesus's Body and Blood – nourished and strengthened to go back out into the world. I often think Sunday Church is the Spiritual equivalent of the half-time lockerroom chat and half an orange of school sports matches.

And that's the feeling I get from St Peter's 1st Epistle today. 'Go in peace glorifying God by your life'. St Peter's words are dripping with the abundance of God's gift. It's not a matter of do-gooding trying to win heavenly brownie points.

It is a matter and realising what a great gift we have been given in Christ, and living from *that* reality. So much of our life is dictated by fears of letting others down, of worries about this or that, or pressures and suspicions and the need to be

protected from the world's dark bits. But Peter says, don't make these things the gut from which you live, make God's goodness your starting point in all things, and live from *there*. Just as you have received, share. What a world that would be? And as with every world-changing movement, it starts with just a few. Christ and the 12, us here today, the small numbers of people who unknown and unrecorded have changed the world by their bold loving and living for the Gospel across the Church's life.

And don't think I'm simply adding more things to your to do list: 'oh great, I've got to call the washing machine repair man, clean the house, get ready for work tomorrow, make a week's worth of lunches *and* live a life dripping with God's love and goodness having become convinced of having received that goodness myself...'

No, that's not how it works. Today's Gospel shows us the way. 40 days after Easter day (which was last Thursday) Jesus ascended into heaven.

10 days after that God sends His Holy Spirit to imbue His Church with power from on high (next Sunday – Whitsun, Pentecost). Then Jesus comes again, but that bit hasn't happened yet. We are still living post Pentecost and pre Jesus's coming again. The age of the Spirit.

It is the Spirit who prays in us when we pray, the Spirit who turns bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus. The Spirit uses water to baptise us, the Spirit who stirs our ability to love, and our conscience. The Spirit who seals loving couples in marriage, and ordains priests, and forgives sins in the Confessional. God has not gone for a nap, His Spirit is with and in us all the time.

And that's the key to unlocking a life that is filled and overflows with God's power and love – a life that glorifies God and brings us the peace that 'passeth all understanding'.

If you spend time being with God in silent prayer it will change every other part of your life. It just will. It's like the warmth of the sun - you can't speed it up, you can't get good at it, prayer is simply a matter of letting the Holy Spirit 'get at' you. Silent prayer. If you would like help with this, then do speak to us.

Also Holy Communion – week by week, day by day. You are what you eat. So eat the Body and Blood of Christ, with regularity and hopefulness and gratitude and be filled with God's grace.

Read the Bible, even a few lines of a Gospel each day while you're on the bus, or before you open your emails, or as the first coffee of the day brews. Stick your bible and book mark behind the coffee pot, or have it saved in a tab on your phone.

And finally, speak with the Holy Spirit. God is here. Always. 'Come Holy Ghost'. Such a simple and powerful prayer. Three words. 'Come Holy Ghost'

Before you get out of bed, and again when you leave the front door, before you walk into that meeting, or click on the zoom link, before you ask your children 'how was your day?', before you approach that difficult topic with your spouse, or spend that time worrying about money and bills this month, as you turn the tap or click the kettle: take a second to say 'Come, Holy Spirit'. Along with Bible, Eucharist and silent prayer, it will begin to change everything. That God in all things', and in you and me 'may be glorified' as St Peter writes.

God is already here, already busy, already loving and healing and strengthening and giving life. All we need to do is open our eyes and join in and we will discover a life full and overflowing with Grace – 'Come, Holy Spirit'. Start today.