

## Pentecost – May 22, 23

The number of ‘mice’ at the crossroads of our planet is substantial. Currently we number eight and a half billion, which in figures looks like 8,500,000,000 soulful human beings on the surface of the earth – a number seared into our consciousness with the current need of global vaccination – and not one of us is easily minded.

Those of us who approach life based on faith in a loving Creator might draw some inspiration from a Gospel approach to the issue. Jesus, it would appear was keenly aware of all kinds of future trauma for those who were ‘his own’ in the world and he offered not just a ‘patch to fix the operating system’, but a built-in component that would carry a large share of the burden for us future Christians.

Of the four evangelists, John offers really incisive information. In the words he records as spoken after the Last Supper there are five separate quotations referring to the gift of God’s Spirit to us, his followers.....

- C 14: I shall ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, that Spirit of truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows him; but you know him, because he is with you, he is in you. [Verses 16, 17]
- C 14: I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you. [Verses 25, 26]
- C 15: When the Advocate comes, whom I shall send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who issues from the Father, he will be my witness. And you too will be witnesses, because you have been with me from the outset. [Verses 26, 27]
- C 16: Still, I must tell you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I do go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will show the world how wrong it was, about sin, and about who was in the right, and about judgement. [Verses 7, 8]
- C 16: I still have many things to say to you but they would be too much for you now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking as from himself but will say only what he has learnt; and he will tell you of the things to come. He will glorify me, since all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. Everything the Father has is mine; that is why I said: all he tells you will be taken from what is mine. [Verses 12-15]

It is well worth reading the full text of John’s Gospel, from C13 to the end of C17. There we find Jesus offering his new commandment, ‘Love one another as I have loved you’, a significant refinement on the sequence of Jewish law that has come down through the ‘Ten Commandments’ and then, as outlined in the quotes above, we see his plan for the future care of all who would follow him, in the gift to us of his Spirit.

Through all four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles we see this plan being put in to action, and sense the transforming courage coming through the presence of that Spirit as Peter and others address the public in Jerusalem. As well, a glimpse at the life of Paul, through the ‘Acts’ and through his writings also shows us how much he drew on that same presence of the Spirit of God in his life – a particularly brilliant understanding is offered in Ephesians C3: vv14-21, which is the basis of the ‘Personal Prayer at Communion Time’ on this weekend’s Missalette.

For every one of us, life, at various stages, can be difficult. Especially at those crucial times we are invited, as human beings gifted with free will, to draw on the strength of the Spirit of God, dwelling within us – and the Spirit of God will see us through. As Paul so accurately offers – ‘glory be to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine’.

That presence with us of God’s Spirit is the foundation stone of a ‘healthy adult spirituality’ – and it enables us, without fear, to contemplate from time to time the question that the poet Mary Oliver poses ‘Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?’