

## THE MUSINGS OF A MODERN DAY PILGRIM

It was a warm August day, wispy white clouds brushed the horizon and the sky was a soft blue. The grasses had almost turned yellow and white and they swished against my legs as I walked across Highdown Hill with my beautiful retriever, Fudge. God's creation has always spoken deeply into my heart even before I recognised it as such or even knew God at all. As I looked around I was filled with awe...what I now call "A God moment!" And decided simply to sit with Fudge and drink it all in. As I sat I remember thinking about my daughter who had recently come to faith and who had been working ever so hard on evangelising her Mother! Many thoughts went through my mind but in the midst of them all I recall asking out loud, "Are you really there God?" And in the moment of my asking I knew but I knew, beyond any doubt that there is a God and that He was right there with me at that moment! I felt a joy flood through me starting in my heart, and every single sense seemed to be heightened 10 fold! A breeze blew across me and I could see colours in hughes I'd never seen, hear every tone and cadence in the sounds around me and I can remember smelling the deep, pungent earth beneath me. After remaining where I was for quite a while I walked back home, feeling like I was floating above the ground! This was my Baptism in the Holy Spirit that changed my life forever in the most beautiful and amazing way.

Matthew 3:11

"I Baptise you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry, He will Baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

The Holy Spirit is, "The Lord, the giver of life," as we declare in our creed. Last Sunday as I listened to Fr Liam saying the Mass I heard him pray in one of the Eucharistic prayers, "...By the power and working of the Holy Spirit you give life to all".

The Holy Spirit changes us, transforms us, helping us to become the person God created each of us to be and as He does this there is an overwhelming awareness of the love that is available to each of us from God. This relationship with the Holy Spirit, the grace of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, is for everyone, not just a select few, but all of us, wherever we are in our lives, how ever we are, we are loved beyond measure.

This love of the Holy Spirit, the eternal love between the Father and the Son, leads us into an encounter with Jesus, who perfectly reveals the love of the Father to us.

In the last few weeks we have read many readings from St Johns Gospel full of Jesus' promise to us of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, without whom we can do nothing!

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." John 11:26

We receive the Holy Spirit at our Baptism and He is confirmed in us at our Confirmation and we receive Him each time we receive the sacrament of the Eucharist but sometimes despite this we simply live on totally unaware of the beautiful, life giving love and power that rests within us. We have to rediscover the Baptism we have received in the Holy Spirit, to take an opportunity to invite the Holy Spirit deeper and more intimately into our lives. It reminds me of the beautiful painting by Holman Hunt called, "The light of the world." Jesus stands and knocks at the door of our hearts but there is no handle on the outside of our heart only on the inside. It is up to us to chose to respond and open our hearts and invite Him in or not. As we do the Holy Spirit flows in revealing the beautiful relationship we can have with Jesus and The Father.

On the third day of our Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella we were following a middle aged couple who were 50 metres or so ahead of us. Dermot turned to me and told me he could feel the Holy Spirit in his heart urging him to tell the man how much Jesus loved him. So we accelerated a bit and caught up with the couple. The gentleman was from Brazil but spoke good English. Dermot asked if he could share with him something he felt God wanted to say to him. As he did just this I watched the man break into deep sobs and hug Dermot. He shared simply that it meant a great deal to him to hear this. We bumped into this couple many times on our pilgrimage and witnessed this man transform and glow and be filled with joy.

So how do we experience the presence of God? How do we recognise Him in our lives? By the gifts he brings. The gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts open a door on our life and we come alive! These gifts are for a purpose, they enlighten our heart and direct our choices, they help to fulfill

God,s purposes for our life and they always move us towards deepening our relationship with God.

So a few questions to ponder...

“I have come to Baptise you in the Holy Spirit and with fire.”  
What does that mean and look like for you?

How does the knowledge that we carry the Holy Spirit within us inform your lives? How does it affect who you are? how you are?, the choices you make?

Keep safe and well.

Yours in Christ, Dermot and Jane-Anne 😊