

## Homily Pentecost Sunday – Year A

### 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016

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There is a tale of a holy man who lived in a simple hut by a deep well in the desert. Every day he would get up before sunrise, give thanks for the day, clean his jars and make sure everything was in order. As a trekker arrived he would offer them a jar of cool clear water. At the end of the day he would give thanks for the day, cook a simple meal and retire to his hut. Word spread of this holy man who lived in the desert. Finally a group of people decided to trek out into the desert to meet this holy man. After a long trek they arrived tired and thirsty at the well and as was his practice the holy man offered them a jar of water. The water was cool and refreshing. Having drunk the water the trekkers felt revitalised and immediately thought the water must have some mystical quality. So they asked the holy man: Where does this water come from? The well, he replied. Is it special? They asked. No, it's just water, but the well is very deep so the water is always cool. But they protested and said we feel revitalised surely there is something special about this water. No, said the holy man it's just water. But, your body needs water after your long trek and I simply gave you what

needed to be refreshed for your journey ahead. Why do you do it the trekkers asked? It's what I do; it's my simple gift back to creation for the wonder of my life replied the holy man. The trekkers were confounded, there must be more to this than simply handing out water. One finally asked; holy man when you die will we see a mighty sign in the heavens? No; said the holy man but I hope you will miss the water.

Like the holy man's water the feast of Pentecost is a time of refreshment and renewal, a time for preparing for the journey ahead. We live in difficult times while we really acknowledge our own brokenness, our sinfulness. But, we find ourselves in a broken Church within a broken Society. Don Dixon the Catholic demographer who works with the Australia Catholic Bishops Conference estimates that by the end of this decade less than 5% of Catholics will regularly attend Mass on Sundays. In all probability they will only attend what my grandfather George used to call the sporting events; "baptisms, weddings and funerals". We will increasingly find ourselves belonging to the church of the unchurched.

The question we need to ask ourselves is: What type of church and society do we wish to leave to our children? This morning after Mass I will baptise five children, and look at these beautiful children who this morning will make their First Holy Communion. People still want to have their children Baptised; they still want their children to receive the Sacraments. These beautiful young children are our future and with them we have a future, without them we have nothing. Without the gifts these young children offer us our Church will become a museum at best, derelict at worst. Both the challenge and message of Pentecost for us, the custodians of our Church, our Faith, is to make this Pentecost a time of refreshment and renewal for the whole Church.

How is this possible? How can I a member of Mary Queen of the Family affect our Church, our Nation and our Society? I'm just me one person? We need to recognise that like the holy man in the desert we need to do one simple thing well. Like our patron, Mary, we need to simply say yes to God in our lives. As a mother Mary carried Jesus the Son of God in a special way. However each and every one of us needs to realise that we all carry Jesus in us. As the monk Thomas

Merton says we all need to realise we are the face of Christ in the world, we walk for the God without legs. We must realise that through our actions in the home, in the playground, in the workplace that Jesus acts in the world. When we smile we smile for Jesus. When we help the new kid at school we are acting for Jesus. When we forgive the wrongs of others we are acting out of the mercy of Jesus. We are Jesus' arms and legs in this world.

Pentecost calls us all to holiness, Pentecost calls us all to discipleship, and Pentecost calls us all to greatness. The challenge we face is to find that holiness, discipleship and greatness in our everyday lives. We need to be saints of the everyday. But we are not alone in our quest we are not left orphaned. No. Pentecost is also a celebration of God's gift of the Holy Spirit to humanity. The Holy Spirit, the third person of our Trinitarian God who accompanies us in the everyday. A Spirit, so powerful that it lifts us up, a Spirit that enabling us to do ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Last week's Gospel message was; "to go therefore and make disciples of all nations." We were called to Act,

Welcome and Grow. Pentecost now launches us on that mission. Propelled by the Holy Spirit we are called to action. At this point my ego says: That's all well and good this call to action but we both know your no Mother Teresa, Mary McKillop or Benedict of Nursia. When I doubt my own ability I need to remember Mary and say yes to God. I need to realise that left to my own devices nothing is possible but if I embrace the Holy Spirit and let the light of Christ shine in me then all things are possible. Like the holy man in the desert I need to focus on doing one simple thing well. One of our Parish goals is to be a welcoming Parish. So if I challenge myself to welcome those around me with the unconditional love of Christ then together we can change our Church, our Nation and our Society. And, then like the holy man when we depart this earthly life we hope the people around us will miss that one simple thing we did extraordinarily well: Love.