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Message for BBNeighbourhoods
26 May 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In a sermon on Pentecost Sunday given by Pope Leo the Great in the fifth century, the Pontiff and Saint reminded the faithful, “The Spirit’s work is still continued in the Church”.

He said that it is the Spirit who “sanctifies the whole Church and quickens every rational soul”. The same Spirit “is the Inspirer of the Faith, the Teacher of Knowledge, the Fount of Love, the Seal of Chastity, and the Cause of all Power”. (cf. Pope Leo the Great, Sermon 75)

These wise and sensible words are as valid today as they were in the fifth century. The great challenge that each one of us faces is to believe them and in so doing, to allow the Spirit to use us in His work of the renewal and the sanctification of our Church and our world. The Spirit is at work in the community of the Church in Broken Bay and in each one of us, his faithful disciples.

Sometimes, there is a temptation to make our faith something rather sophisticated by quoting rules and regulations or theological essays or articles. Do not get me wrong, I am not anti-education. I am the first to encourage people to read more about the faith, to study more deeply, what we believe. However, if our newly acquired knowledge tempts us to think that we are sophisticated in the faith, the temptation might also be to establish a false hierarchy of discipleship where some are perceived to be “better” than others. That is something to be avoided.

As we approach the great feast of Pentecost this Sunday, might we see these days as a time of preparation for faithful discipleship? I think that in a simple kind of way God desires to reveal to us, the living disciples of Christ, the action of His Spirit in us and in our community.

It is encouraging to remember that the Spirit is given to all people – men and women, girls and boys, young and old, weak and strong. Saint Paul reminds us that the Spirit will come to our aid in our human weakness. During his mission and ministry, Paul was constantly confronted with difficulties, challenges and resistance. And yet, he constantly emboldened the community by reminding them that the Spirit enlightens our minds and hearts so that we might hear the words of Jesus, and in this way we will be led – and we will also lead others – to the all-embracing encounter with God our Father.

Over these coming days, I pray that the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit will be with you and your families.

+Anthony