

Homily 2022.05.22 6th Sunday of Easter (Year C)

Importance of the First Reading:

The first argument or row in the church: a debate, a council, a synod. With delegates and letters being sent back and forth.

The question is: Does a gentile or pagan (ie: a non-Jew) who wishes to become a Christian, need to become a Jew first? The answer was no. But what matters is the process, especially in the light of the Synod Pathway recently outlined by Pope Francis. It's worth reading Acts 15 in its entirety. Parts of it read like the minutes of a meeting. It's the speaking, and crucially the listening – all led by the Spirit – that leads to the decision, and it's a model of decision making for our own day.

Being led by the Spirit is something we should take seriously in the here and now.

We move now into the final fortnight of Eastertide, as we approach the Solemnities of the Ascension and Pentecost. This fortnight is to Pentecost what Advent is to Christmas and Lent is to Easter, and we should approach this time with the same application as in those other seasons – otherwise Pentecost goes by in a flash and we miss it. We should make as much fuss about God coming to us in the Holy Spirit as we do about God coming to us as the baby at Bethlehem. Pentecost is the 'Birthday of the Church'.

In particular the nine days of waiting between Ascension and Pentecost is the foundation of the idea of a Novena (nine days of prayer). Our World is in desperate need of the Holy Spirit, so we should pray with urgency in these days:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.