

Acts 2.1-21
John 7.37-39

My older dog, Digby, is beginning to find life a little challenging. Both his eyesight and hearing are beginning to go, as well as his joints becoming stiff and uncomfortable. When discussing this with my dad he said 'tell me about it!' As a result of age, Digby is finding that doing the everyday things expected of him are not easy, and yet, he is not very good at allowing me to help him. (Again, a bit like my dad!) Digby has always been his own dog, choosing what to do, when, and how to do it, but keeping a tight hold on his independence is in fact reducing his world and meaning he is less able to live life to its fullness.

This got me thinking about about faith and about how so many of us choose to live our Christian lives independently of God's help. We believe we are called to live for God rather than to live with him. Many times in the Gospels we saw the results of Peter's attempts to be part of Jesus' ministry without listening to Jesus' guidance, but today, on Pentecost Sunday, we rejoice with Peter and so many followers, as Jesus' promise of a helper is both fulfilled and received. A gift not just for those who were close to Jesus, but for everyone who believed. It didn't matter who they were or where they came from, the only criteria was belief and a willingness to receive.

There are Christians today who believe the Holy Spirit was only for those extraordinary times of the early Church. They do not recognise that power in today's world. However, God never intended his children to live to their fullest alone. He promised a helper and he has delivered on his promise. All we have to do is to ask and receive. God is so much greater and more exciting than we could ever imagine, meaning there will always be more that God wants to give and share with us than we will ever be able to ask for. As was written in the reading from John's Gospel, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink... "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." ' As we celebrate that first outpouring of the Holy Spirit let us ask of ourselves where do we see God's Spirit at work in our lives, through our lives, in our communities and in the wider world? However greatly the Holy Spirit is moving in our lives let us not be people who will settle for what we have, let us ask, with expectation, for more of his outpouring. Let us have the courage to go further and deeper with God than we ever thought possible, strong in the faith that we do not do this alone but with God's help and in his power.

There are many things I could do for Digby to make his life more comfortable but he will not allow me to do them. There are many things in our Christian lives that could be more effective and fulfilling if we would just allow the Holy Spirit to be part of our faith. But, we can be sure that God will not go in our lives to where he is not invited, so I encourage you, this Pentecost and after, to join me in saying, and meaning, the invitation 'Come Holy Spirit'. And let us see, with anticipation, where this will take us.