

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE – *PENTECOST - 'Unlock the Doors!'*

22 / 23 May 2010

Dear Friends

I wonder how many people leave their doors unlocked these days. Even when we leave our car unattended for a couple of minutes, we often lock the doors. We are more likely to find homes unlocked in the country than in the city. It's an unfortunate reminder of how we live, of our fears perhaps, and the times we close the doors of our hearts to other people.

Irish Augustinian Fr John Byrne reflects on how some people have the gift of breaking through our closed doors and asks: *Do you have memories of people getting through to you and being with you despite your closed doors? Who brought you peace in a time of anxiety?* (Intercom May 2010). These questions may resonate with us as we recall times of particular personal need. Sometimes when we show our vulnerability to another, they are freed to share their vulnerability with us. Fr John reminds us, *'Jesus showed his wounds to his friends.'*

While Pentecost is not primarily about our difficult times, a close look at the gifts and fruits of the Spirit reveal just how graced we are and what a remarkable God-given capacity each of us has to grow and to support others:

- *Gifts of the Spirit – Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Right Judgement (Counsel), Courage (Fortitude), Reverence (Piety), Wonder and Awe in God's Presence (Fear of the Lord);*
- *Fruits of the Spirit – Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-control, Chastity.*

Gifts can only change us if we 'receive' them, welcome them and act upon them. So with the gifts and fruits of the Spirit which have a remarkable power to change our lives, make us free, give us 'wings', so to speak. Think of the gifts that parents give to their children; think of the gifts that our parents have given us or 'called forth' from within us.

Pentecost must never become simply the annual feast when we reflect on the Spirit's action in our lives. The whole point of Jesus' returning to his Father is so that he can be present with us in an even more intense way, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Who are the Spirit-filled people in our lives? How do we recognise them? Aren't they the ones who forgive readily, love generously, bear with our limitations, listen carefully, act justly, walk humbly with their God?

A week ago, our Parish Community farewelled a long-time parishioner, Daniel David. Daniel was 81 when he died and at his Funeral Mass the church was full. A man of extraordinary faith, Daniel was committed to righting injustice when he saw it. Though in failing health over recent years, he persevered in his involvement with the local conference of St Vincent de Paul and went so far

as to visit his native Sri Lanka after the tsunami and deliver financial aid personally.

Who are the Spirit-filled people in our lives? Thankfully, we don't have to look very far – but we do need to look ... and to name them!

Fr Dave