

Dear Friends,

At his baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon and remained on Jesus. You are invited to join with Jesus in receiving and being empowered by the Spirit.

God gives the Spirit freely as God chooses. It may be that God fills someone with the Spirit who is very resistant and full of defences, while someone else who has prayed long and hard for the gift may feel left in a state of waiting. It tends to be however that the more open you become to God the more likely you are to dispose yourself to receive the Spirit.

You help this process by entering into ever deepening spirals of letting go. You let go of the attachments that hold you back from full openness to God; you let go of the attitudes that are obstacles to your receiving the Spirit.

You let go of any thought that it is by your effort that you receive the Spirit. There is nothing that you have to do. You do not have to be good or religious or know the right things. You simply say "yes" to God and agree to receive what God willingly and generously gives.

You let go of desire. You do not attach your own strings to God's gift. You do not receive the Spirit so that God will do a particular thing that you want. You do not receive the Spirit in order to achieve something or get something or become something. You do not receive the Spirit so that others will think well of you. No, to open to the Spirit is to put yourself completely at God's disposal so that you may do, say and be what God wants.

God wants to strengthen and equip you with the Spirit so that you fulfil the commission of Jesus. He says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you". God sent Jesus on a mission of love. He went about doing good. He came not to be served but to serve. He came that others might have life and have it abundantly.

As the Church we are called to be Christlike, to go about doing the things and saying the words of Jesus. We are called to be the body of Christ. As Teresa of Avilla put it, "Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours".

It's a big ask, a tall order for us to be the body of Christ, but it's what God wants and by the power of the Spirit, it is something that we may be.

You are invited to join with Jesus in being open to the Spirit.

God bless you,

Tony