

Feast of Pentecost, 24/5/2015, Holy Trinity

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

Have you bought something in a flat pack that needed to be assembled when you took it home?

You have made the purchase, managed to take it to the car, struggled to fit it in, struggled to get it out, then through the front door and finally on the floor inside the house.

Then the “fun” begins: find a way to open the packaging, take out a hundred bits and pieces including nuts and bolts and some kind of a tool to be used to put it together.

When everything is spread out on the floor you find that the book of instructions is at the bottom of the pack.

Then you find the English translation among a whole host of languages and realise that it is a translation by someone who didn't seem to know much about English expression. You finish with a literal translation that doesn't seem to make much sense.

At this stage I hand it over to Maureen on the excuse that I am so heavenly minded that I am no earthly use.

She can cope with it far better than I and she manages to put the item together.

This leads me to think of the disciples in that upper room, after the Ascension and before Pentecost.

They had received the flat pack, they had received the task.

They were to go into the whole world to tell about the Good News of the Resurrection, baptising those who believed.

They were to be witnesses almost like in a court room to tell “the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth”.

On the other hand, being a witness can be a challenging, dangerous business.

Christian witness can lead to death, not just at that time in history of being stoned to death or being crucified, but today it can lead to death in some countries as we have heard in the news recently.

It must have been a daunting task for those first disciples.

So what did they do?

It would have been very easy to have stayed in that Upper Room in the hope that others would come and join them.

They had the flat pack, the task was to go into the whole world, to tell the Good News of the Resurrection and to baptise those who believed but did they have the tools to put it together?

Then something amazing happened.

They were attacked by what seemed to be wind and fire, ancient symbols of God's presence.

With that energy they had the courage to go out into the street, where they were accused of being drunk at that hour of the morning.

This had been promised to them and amidst their doubts and fears they were on the street witnessing for people and places everywhere.

The Church was on the move.

The Holy Spirit was given to the Church to be the Church and to fulfil the Church's mission to go into all the world and witness to the power of the Resurrection even if it leads to death in martyrdom.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on people of every language and ethnicity, male and female, of different socio-economic groups and so on.

There was, also, to be a unity among the people, not uniformity, but unity, a oneness as seen in the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This unity was to come through the Church's love for God.

Pentecost was an awe-inspiring day.

It is through the same Holy Spirit that we welcome strangers into our midst and become family as we witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ to people and places wherever we may go.

It is through the same Holy Spirit that we have a unity within the Church and within our parish and diocese.

May the Holy Spirit renew us today to be such witnesses and as we pray, "Come, Holy Spirit, come" you had better watch out!

Your prayer may be answered and what then: "Can we turn our world upside down?"

Time will tell and I hope we are here to see it.