

From Fr David Bowlere



Jesus perhaps did not start the Church during his time on earth. The Church was born after his death on the feast of Pentecost, John in his gospel, tells us that the birth of the Church was a new creation. God carried out through his Spirit in the light of the Resurrection.

The first day of the week according to Genesis is the start of creation. John tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus appeared to his disciples. Just as Adam was given life by God breathing into the clay image, Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit into the disciples. This receiving of the Spirit was also an experience of God's peace with all its positivity. Now the disciples were capable of bringing prosperity and richness to the world.

To know what happened after the disciples received the Holy Spirit, look into the Acts of the Apostles. The disciples were then brave to come out and preach boldly the message of the resurrection of Jesus and the gift of the forgiveness of sins. It was this message that was to unify the world. What was shattered by the pride and arrogance of humans, as we read in the story of Babel in Genesis is now gifted with mutual understanding, unity and God's gift of peace.

This then was the beginning of the Church, which continues to bring unity wherever there is crisis and unrest. The Church continues to bring greater life wherever people are mortified for whatever reasons. In all these, the Acts of the Apostles make clear a point; in spite of the tireless work of the missionaries, the Church is not actually the product of their labour. Jesus asked the disciples to wait until they received the Holy Spirit, which they did. It was only with the Holy Spirit in them that they could produce the results which they did! This means the Holy Spirit really brought about the Church, not any human cleverness.

The Church both in our time and in the past has often been rocked by crisis, scandals and corruption. But these have actually not destroyed the Church. Perhaps the crisis in history have made the Church come out with a renewed vigour and commitment. This is because our Church was started and has been continually guided by the Holy Spirit, not by human ways and thinking.

We are now those very disciples in 2023 - and it is important that we keep up the loving communion with Jesus always enjoying and living the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Peace that the Risen and Ascended Lord Jesus offers us.

May the power of the Holy Spirit abound in us and in the world in spite of all the many challenges we and our Church face today.

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