

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Confidence to speak out

Acts 2:1-21

How confident are you to speak in public? It is a question that can give really different answers and usually has an answer such as it depends on whether I know the group or whether they are adults or children, or whether I am speaking on a subject I know well etc. Many people find the prospect of speaking in public to a group of people known or unknown a little daunting and if it involved standing up to speak to a group who are not expecting it, almost impossible.

But that is what we find in the reading for Pentecost. A group, who having been scared of the potential repercussions of speaking what they believed, suddenly addressed the crowd with a confidence that probably surprised themselves. The change in their lives was the coming of the Holy Spirit, the comforter from God who builds boldness in His followers.

In our nation at present there is a growing interest in another dimension to life that is beyond this world. People are searching for meaning and are open to the gospel message and learning more of who Jesus was and is. In many cases there is inquisitiveness and interest but the thing that can stop the further exploration is the confidence of Jesus' followers to talk about our relationship with him and our church life and the impact on our lives. This comes down to confidence, not the bravado of a particular personality trait but the deep confidence that comes from assurance in God.

Our reading from Acts gives us the clearest instruction as followers of Jesus of where we can find that confidence to speak out about our faith, or to explain the reason for our work for the marginalised or to simply invite people to church. The Holy Spirit is where we can find that strength. So, this Pentecost, let us pray for a refilling of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we might experience the "wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below" and might have the confidence of Peter to speak to those around us about Jesus, whether in a public forum or with a friend in a conversation.

Come Holy Spirit.

Stephen Whittaker, Diocesan Secretary

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