

# ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGEMENT

May 2013 – Issue 22

## Communion and Communication

THE HOST APOSTOLATE

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One of the issues of our time is that we have so many means of communication with phones, mobiles, computers and any number of electronic gadgets as well as the written word that we sometimes forget to use speech and simply talk to one another in a meaningful way. This not only prevents us from growing closer but often leads to misunderstandings but also prevents true communication and communion of the spirit. How simply Jesus communicated with each person He met. He spoke directly to each one sometimes using examples, parables but always directly. He engaged with people so openly that they could either accept or reject what He had to say. Indeed he told people to make their 'Yes' a yes and their 'No' a no (Matt.5: 37) clear concise and direct. Often they understood better than the ones around them for the words were addressed to them individually – to their hearts.

Much of our communication is filled with not only directives and requests but agendas – our own interpretation of events and our prejudices and judgements.

Our communication is thus full of half-truths and loaded with fears of equally being judged by others or because we hold certain beliefs or views. This makes dialogue not only difficult but thwarts both understanding of each other and true communion, a love for all. Indeed it is a 'shut down'.

In this month of May we start with the feast of St Joseph the Worker and it is Mary's Month both of whose silence is eloquent because they spoke little but served and loved much.



We have also the feast of the Ascension with the request of Jesus to go out and teach all nations Baptising and proclaiming the truth of the Good News.

Following we have the great Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, The Helper, who comes to guide and console us.

In these days of a thousand words it is good to reflect both on the power of silence, the gift of listening to God( and each other) and the promise that Jesus gave that we do not have to worry about what we have to say for the Spirit will guide us if we are communicating the truth.

“This will be your chance to tell the Good News. Make up your minds beforehand not to worry about how to defend yourselves because I will give you such words and wisdom that your enemies will not be able to refute or contradict what you say. (John) or as Luke says ... ‘for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.’

These are word that we should take note of especially when we are evangelising but also when we are trying to communicate with someone.

Jesus left us two extraordinary gifts, reminders of His presence – His Body and Blood at the last Supper which came to completion at His death on the Cross. His Body was to be broken , his Blood spilt but he left us a remarkable testimony of Himself, a living memorial which when we eat ‘It ‘we are drawn into greater communion with Him and each other. He knew that he would rise and conquer death but he would depart from this earth but did not leave us bereft, or orphans.

He left us Himself, The Father and sent us the Holy Spirit, The Great Enlightener. If we live in The Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Spirit, if we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man we are given food for the journey of life and the attributes of love which we can share with others.

If we truly receive the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, an affirmation of our Baptism we become able to utilise all the sevenfold gifts necessary for true communication, *Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude (Courage), Knowledge, Piety (Reverence) and Fear of The Lord.*

When we rely on these and use them we bear fruit in abundance with kindness, charity/love peace joy goodness, gentleness and self-control as St Paul says (Galatians 5 22-25).

With these gifts surely we can communicate with each other and bring wholeness to others and blessings to ourselves.

H.H.



### Talking Amongst Ourselves

When we gather after Holy Mass, or at a social function of the church there can be great atmosphere, among friends. It is worth remembering that once we were all strangers and many of us may still feel like strangers if people gossip, rather than talk in order to communicate. We must take care in what we say – not knowing another's circumstances or feelings – and remember that we stand as witnesses for Jesus Himself, even relaxing with a cup of tea: perhaps especially then.

Our Christian journey is about Charity and Truth, so we should not trivialise our use of words to avoid awkward situations, and we should be prepared to listen, and listen well, to those we may not really like. It is easy to misjudge by appearances and prejudices, the results of which may be matters for confession. We should be attentive to learning about our Faith – and a stranger in a parish gathering may be a renewing breath of fresh air (and the Spirit) in air grown tired.

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#### Prayer thoughts...

In these months many children receive Jesus' Body and Blood for the first time. May we never fail to inspire them with truth and encourage them to communicate with Him and serve with Joy.

The eighth commandment tells us '*Do not bear false witness*' so we must ask ourselves three questions of how we talk to others:

Do we seek the Gospel, risking our comfort zones and the established, but not always right, ways of doing things?

Do we seek to help another, sometimes simply to listen, or do we talk about ourselves, perhaps too much?

Are we aware that everything we say and do affects others, and that the vulnerable person prayed for may be sitting next you?

We belong to a Faith of *The Living Word of God and Sacrament* and after we have gathered to pray, we must use all means to communicate – be it a simple smile, a hug, a clasp of the hand. Sharing our Faith journey, often so helpful to others must always be respectful of another's (journey). None of this is easy, but the Holy Spirit makes it possible, and that Spirit is available to all of us, whenever we need help.

Saint Paul likened the tongue to a ship's rudder – capable of guiding the vessel safely home to port, or wrecking it upon the rocks. If we take time apart in sacred silence, and truly listen to others, then we are more likely to make the better choices. There are many ways of saying the same thing and all *may* be necessary. Simply consider the way the Parables of Jesus repeat the same Truths, and that the apostles still didn't properly understand what they heard of the Kingdom when they travelled with Jesus within time. Like them, we too must at times accept, and wait in darkness for the Holy Spirit.

Some of us remain strangers, the unemployed, the poor, the rejected, the sick... and the right words at the right time can begin healing, or the wrong words can bring disaster. Many visitors to a church may take a little more notice of social matters than liturgy and worship – we can make them welcome as they deepen their Faith.

If we do not recognise the silence in which God speaks to us all from time to time, we have missed the point of communication and communion.

C.C.Y

Be humble toward God and gentle with your neighbour.  
Judge and accuse no one but yourself,  
and ever excuse others. St. Margaret Mary Alacoque

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We pray especially too for all who proclaim the Gospel in difficult times and that young people, filled with the Holy Spirit will have the courage to speak and live the message of Peace And Hope.

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