

I believe in the Holy Spirit

Readings: Genesis 1:1-2, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Matthew 28:19, Revelation 22:17

We have looked in recent weeks at I believe in God the Father, at I believe in Jesus Christ and now we come to the Holy Spirit the third part of what we call the Trinity – shorthand for recognising that God is one being with 3 distinctive aspects.

I chose our readings this evening to illustrate that the Holy Spirit is part of the story of our world from the very beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation and all points in between. The Holy Spirit is also part of our individual stories from the beginning, through all the messy and complicated bits in the middle and with us to the end if we choose to live our lives with God. It is the Spirit that prompts us to find out about God, converts our curiosity into decision to believe and then helps our faith to grow.

I always think that the Holy Spirit is the all or nothing aspect of God, we talk to and respect the Father, we walk alongside the Son, but as we heard in our reading from Ezekiel, God wants to put his Holy Spirit into us – right inside so it becomes part of our very being.

Henry Nouwen a Dutch priest and theologian said , ‘The Spirit of God is like our breath. God’s spirit is more intimate to us than we are to ourselves. We might not often be aware of it, but without it we cannot live a “spiritual life”. It is the Holy Spirit of God who prays in us, who offers us the gifts of love, forgiveness, kindness, goodness, gentleness, peace and joy. It is the Holy Spirit who offers us the life that death cannot destroy. Let us always pray: “Come, Holy Spirit, come.”’

Most of us don’t give a moment’s thought to our breathing though it is essential, our body regulates how fast and how deep we breathe without any conscious effort – it is only when things go wrong that we become conscious of it and realise what an important thing it is. Earlier this year, I started getting out of breath walking from room to room or up and down the stairs and I knew something was wrong and I needed help, the amazing staff at Addenbrookes quickly identified the problem and have given me tablets which I need to take twice a day for the rest of my life to stop the blood clots that were blocking my breathing coming back. Sometimes it feels like we are getting spiritually out of breath, our prayers feel like they are bouncing off the ceiling and the bible becomes just a book then we need to renew our relationship with the Spirit, seeking help from others sometimes, or just praying as Nouwen suggests, “Come, Holy Spirit, come” and just like my tablets its something we need to do regularly to maintain a right relationship with God.

We heard this morning how Jesus walked on the water and told Peter to ‘come’ to Him, how wonderful that God wants a two way relationship with us – He is always saying ‘come’ to us, if we say it to Him, then as we read earlier His Spirit will live in us and it will be the water of life keeping us refreshed and close to God.

At the start of this week I mentioned to a friend that I was talking about the Holy Spirit tonight, ‘how am I going to fit it all in 5 minutes?’ I asked, she replied that she could do it in 7 words, those 7 words are “so you know God is always there”

When we say the Nicene Creed in a moment we will say that we believe in ‘The Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of life’ I challenge you to say Come to the Holy Spirit “ so you know God is always there”