

Sunday Message from Fr William for Fourth Sunday of Lent 2024

*The 'Other World' continued from 03.03.24*

Do not be surprised that the words Christ speaks to us are 'spirit'. (*John 6:63*). Do not be surprised that his words are charged with the Spirit, his Spirit. Just as the Son, in his infinite humility, adapted himself to this world, adapted himself to the smallness of our human condition, so too the Spirit, in the same infinite humility, adapts himself to the languages of this world, and allows himself to be carried in the words of human speech. It is the Son, in his love for us, that speaks his words to us. It is he who has charged them with his Spirit. This why his words continue to carry his Spirit into us – into our ears, and on into the mechanics of our central nervous system – for the spiritualisation of our bodies. This is just one reason why, in Christian tradition, the celebration of the Christian sacraments always begins with listening to his words.

But love can also be wordless. A parent's love for her child, for example, can be wordless. Use this as an analogy to understand how the Spirit can also be breathed into a human being in a wordless way. In Christian tradition, the celebration of the Christian sacraments begins with listening to the words of Christ, but then moves on to the sacrament itself, whether this be for example Baptism, Confirmation or Eucharist. In Christian tradition each sacrament contributes in its own unique way to our participation in the life of Father, Son and Spirit. A full exploration of this staggering claim is for later in these reflections on the 'other world'. But my focus here is on the Spirit. And in the celebration of each sacrament the Spirit is breathed, wordlessly, like wordless love, into the human organism, into 'minds and hearts', into Man and into everything he is. The Sacrament of Confirmation in particular is understood to be an infusion, and in-pouring, of the Spirit in the same manner that the first disciples were said to be filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. (*Acts 2*).

These are the two principal ways in which the Spirit is breathed/poured into us throughout our lives in this world – through the words of the Son, and through his sacraments. But his coming into us is not limited to these two ways of giving. The ways of the Spirit are not circumscribed, but are limitless, and ever new. (*see 9 July 2023*). Let me give you one more example.

The analogy of a parent again, and the love she gives her child during his infancy and throughout his life in this world. I gave this as an analogy of Christ as our 'parent' breathing his Spirit into us from the 'other world', the essential source of our ongoing spiritualisation. It serves as an analogy, but it is at the same time a contribution to the child's ongoing spiritualisation. You see the parent is not just a human organism. She too is somewhere along her own journey of spiritualisation. The Son has been breathing his Spirit into her probably long before her child was born. Her love is already more than just instinct. It is already a participation in the love that is the Spirit, the love that comes from the 'other world'. And to this extent her words to her child, the wisdom she passes on, the instruction she gives, the courage she instils, in short the love she gives her child, are all actually not just of this world, but also of the Spirit. Her love for her child, this too is the Spirit being breathed into him.

*to be continued...*

*William*

10 march 2024