

Encountering the Holy Spirit

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"Come now, let us talk this over, says The Lord. Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they are red as crimson they shall be like wool". (Isaiah 1:18).

I found myself reading this passage as a young priest, when I was struggling with so many things about myself and priesthood, and at the very moment I finished reading this passage I felt the arm of God The Father wrap around me, and the utter unconditional reassurance that all would be well was totally overwhelming...I knew then that God never leaves us alone in our brokenness. God wants to walk with us and be alongside us as we journey into wholeness and holiness.

Another line from Scripture that I lean on very often is, 'Where sin increases, Grace abounds all the more.' (Romans 5:20). Again, The Lord is so very keen to reassure us that no matter where we find ourselves in life, there is always a way out, if we open up and surrender to Him, and receive His Grace: God's free Love. The Lord is less keen to know our sins and more keen to know what we have learnt from our experiences, for it is only in Him that we can be fully healed and brought to wholeness and holiness.

On a recent conference a priest led part of the conference in prayer and one of his liturgies involved small clay pots. We were all asked to pick a pot and sit and pray with it. Most of the pots were chipped and cracked. I picked a pot that was well cracked and chipped and had a large hole in the bottom, but it was held together by wire. As I gazed at the pot I realised that I too was quite cracked and broken and often I felt that the bottom of my life had fallen out across my life: family, prayer, priesthood, friends, parishioners, pastoral ministry...that I had hurt and been hurt, that I was wounded and had wounded, and yet the wire of God's Mercy had held me and others together, had given me shape and integrity. That areas of my life may still be broken and cracked is not fully the point, the point is that God is holding me in the 'wire' of His Mercy, in the 'wire' of Forgiveness, Peace, Love and Order, for it is only God who is able to bring broken things fully to wholeness and holiness.

Our Mission as a community and Diocese of Faith is to bring people to wholeness and holiness in the power of The Lord. Our Mission is to help people recognise the Presence of God in their lives. Our Mission is to make the Invisible God Visible; we have to help people know the arm of God's Love, the supportive wire of God that holds all in place despite the brokenness that is us. It is the Holy Spirit that makes the Invisible God Visible, as at the Annunciation and at Mass when the priest invites the Holy Spirit into the bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Christ – God Present to and among us, holding us together as The Body of Christ, in wholeness and holiness.