

## SIXTH WEDNESDAY OF EASTERTIDE

MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 2020

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

Please find the readings by clicking on Universalis. There is a link from the new website [www.olaspandstjosephs.org.uk](http://www.olaspandstjosephs.org.uk)

I have borrowed the image & words with regards to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit from the Scottish Catholic Education Service [www.sces.org.uk](http://www.sces.org.uk) I have added some reflections of my own in this blue.

Perhaps we can think about how The Acts of the Apostles help us prepare for the feast of Pentecost that we will all celebrate in a few days time. If we think of the mission and **Journeys of Saint Paul**, we can see that he demonstrates many of the **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**.



**KNOWLEDGE** is the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to know ourselves, God and the world around us.

It is about more than just facts. Knowledge is our map to know where our faith is leading us and what our Church is about.

**Paul sought Knowledge.** We know that as a Jew, Saul (as he was then known), studied with one of the greatest teachers of his day, Gamaliel. Saul had a passion for Scripture & knowledge of the law. It was what initially drew him to be against the new religion arising from the teachings of Jesus. Fortunately for us, his search for truth led him to conversion. The power of the Almighty changed his life completely by the desert experience. This has echoes in how many of the prophets in the Old Testament became absorbed in God's love & found the bravery to proclaim God's word.

**REVERENCE** is the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to have a deep sense of respect for God and the Church.

Without Reverence we can't have knowledge.

It teaches us to treat our fragile world gently, including our friends & family.

Reverence helps us to pray with trust and respect and to see God in everything around us.

**Paul had Reverence** both for God & for those with whom he is speaking. This is abundantly clear in today's reading from Acts. He compliments the townsfolk on their image to an unknown god & suggests he can put a name to him.

**WISDOM** is the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us to love God and spiritual things more than material things.

It shines a light on God's plan in our lives and in the world.

Wisdom helps us to say, "I understand how to love."

**Paul demonstrated Wisdom.** Before Paul could have preached as he did, he not only had to study with great teachers, but he had to let the teachings seep in. He then had to pray & meditate. Few can simply stand up & give a speech without adequate preparation. Paul did his homework first, over many years of study & prayer. The combination of the two gave him the wisdom to convince others that he had something to say.

**COURAGE** is the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us be confident to say we are disciples of Jesus.

A person with Courage has the strength to stand up for what is right, even if it means being unpopular.

Courage gives us the strength and stamina to walk out into the world and feel prepared.

**Paul had Courage in spades.** We consider the times that we hear that Paul & his companions made perilous sea crossings, were shouted at by crowds, held to account by authorities, beaten & imprisoned. That Paul had courage is in no doubt. It led him to allow himself to become a prisoner of conscience. It was his faith that took him to Rome & to his end.

**WONDER AND AWE** is the gift of the Holy Spirit that helps us become aware of the glory and majesty of God.

Wonder and Awe is the beginning of Wisdom because it helps us see that God is the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

**The writings of Saint Paul are full of Wonder & Awe.** *We do not know whether Paul could sing, but it is likely he was quite a charismatic figure & he would have brought this to his worship. This below is from the first few verses of his letter to the Ephesians, people of Ephesus in Turkey:*

*Ch. 1 v. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. <sup>4</sup>For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup>he<sup>[b]</sup>predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, <sup>9</sup>he<sup>[d]</sup> made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup>to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

**RIGHT JUDGEMENT** With this gift, we know the difference between right and wrong, and we choose to do what is right.

A person with Right Judgement avoids sin and lives their life in the way taught by Jesus.

**Paul tried to live by Right Judgement.** Paul tried to lead a good & holy life. he had to make up ground from how he had been, persecuting the first Christians. For many who read Saint Paul today, they find him too much. A little bit of Paul can be a good thing. We can look at his writing from the values of today & find points where we might disagree. He was a man of his day, radical in some areas & traditional in others. We might not see eye to eye with him on some areas of social justice but then our world is completely different from his. In our time, we can respect him & do as he might have done: keep close to Jesus & also understand the human condition as it is in the twenty first century.

**UNDERSTANDING** helps us to have an insight into what God is asking us to do and how we should live our lives.

With Understanding, being a disciple of Jesus is always refreshing and life-giving to ourselves and others.

Understanding is letting the Word of God have room in our lives.

**Paul was a man of Understanding.** He reflected on the situation he was in & helped interpret it by getting to know the people around him & private prayer & public praise.