



## Reflection for Pentecost Sunday 31 May and Monday 1 June by Mgr Daniel McHugh

### We have been sent

The famous Elon Musk has just announced his audacious new plan to send people into space: some people would say his dream of cities on Mars is a bit far fetched, and that those who have money to spend on a trip to outer space like this must have more money than they know what to do with! I know one thing: it must be wonderful to see the earth from space, as those first astronauts did years ago; it led one of them to quote the Book of Genesis on Creation, if you recall.

However, in the account of the Ascension of Jesus, his return to His Father, in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, last week, we read that those Disciples were standing looking into Heavens as Jesus ascended and they were challenged by the Angels: “Why are you men from Galilee standing there looking into the Sky”. Jesus had told them “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth.”

The message of Pentecost Sunday, the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit, is that, like the Apostles, we have power from on high to live a new life **now**, to make a difference as people say, we have a mission!

Some years ago I was fortunate enough to go to the Holy Land and to go up Mount Sinai where Moses received the 10 Commandments. At the foot of the Mountain is the Monastery of St Catherine, where the “Burning Bush” is to be found. You may recall the miracle when Moses received his mission from God to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in the land of Egypt. The experience was as if the Bush where he came into the presence of God, was on fire. Moses was fearful of the mission he was given, and tried to avoid it. In Exodus Chapter 4 God gives Moses the help of Aaron, a more eloquent speaker, to work with him, “a mouthpiece”, it says in Scripture.

I thought of this as I read the account in the Acts of the Apostles of the coming of the Holy Spirit on Our Lady and the Apostles at Pentecost, where it says “suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven .... and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire.” They, like Moses, were fearful of what their future might be. Now they were to learn of the presence of the Spirit of Jesus to empower them to fulfil the mission Jesus gave them at His Ascension.

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Many of us are daunted by the idea of carrying out the Mission given us at Baptism and Confirmation to be Witnesses to Jesus in our lives. But the reading from St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians for Pentecost brings this down to earth when he speaks to them about a variety of gifts from the same Spirit.

Father Brendan Maguire in his Homily for today published in his book “Seeds for the Soul” says to his parishioners “we are called to discover our own gifts and direct them towards others ... Imagine if we all took time today to discover what we really love to do and what we are good at doing. Then we directed those gifts towards others. Whether it be singing or proclaiming here on Sundays, or speaking in front of people from your work during the week, or whether it is serving at the table on Sundays, or serving the homeless in the shelters, or whether it be teaching in the classroom, or teaching your children at home, or whether visiting your family, or visiting the family-less. No matter what, our gifts can be turned towards the good of the entire family of humanity.” He concludes by saying “what an incredible Christian Family his Parish would be”.

So, there is no need to stand there dumbfounded looking to the sky, our mission can be lived out there and now. Let us pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to come into our lives to empower us to live out our calling using the words of Psalm 103 in the Pentecost Mass: “Send forth your Spirit O Lord and renew the face of the earth” while remembering the words of Our Lord “I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already”. He is depending on you and me!

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