

He will take what is mine, says Jesus and declare it to you. When we give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit, that verse should be very much at the heart of our thinking and our praying. The Holy Spirit is taking what belongs to Jesus, and not just declaring it – not just talking about it – but actually sharing it. It's very clear from those wonderful chapters in John's gospel, that what is going to happen when the Spirit comes is not just that we're going to hear a lot of interesting new ideas about God, but that somehow what belongs to Jesus – the glory that he had with the Father before the world began, as he says – that is going to become ours.

So if we start thinking about what exactly that might mean, two things at least may come to mind. What belongs to Jesus? What is it that belongs to Jesus that the Holy Spirit shares with us? Well, what belongs to Jesus, first and foremost, is two kinds of life or identity. There's his life with God, that eternal life with God in the mystery of the Holy Trinity; that everlasting outpouring of joy and delight and adoration which the eternal Christ gives to the eternal Father – a little foretaste of what we'll be thinking about next Sunday when we celebrate the mystery of the Trinity. What belongs to Jesus is that unfathomable depth of relationship, to the everlasting Love out of which everything springs – a reality for which we have no words and no clear ideas. We can only look into a deepening – always deepening – mystery. And that is what belongs to Jesus and what the Holy Spirit shares with us.

Because through the gift of the Holy Spirit, so St Paul tells us, we're able to share the prayer that Jesus prays. When we say "Our Father" we're jumping into that great mystery, that depth of eternal prayer, which Christ gives to the Father. It really is like hurling ourselves into a river flowing towards the mystery, flowing towards a kind of waterfall over which the water drops forever and ever. The prayer of the eternal Christ to the eternal Father. That's what the Holy Spirit shares with us. It belongs to Jesus, it is given to us, and when we say those apparently very simple words "Our Father who art in Heaven" we ought to think of sailing towards the waterfall. We are being carried along by the eternal strength of Jesus' love for the Father, his everlasting prayer.

That's exciting enough, but of course what also belongs to Jesus is humanity. And not just any old humanity, but a humanity that is in touch with every human being who has ever lived and ever will live. By taking on our human nature, the everlasting Son of God has related himself to every human being in every age and every place. And that humanity that is in touch with the whole human mystery – that which belongs to Jesus – that too becomes ours. We become part of a new humanity, a new human race, a new level of connectedness with every human being.

And that's pretty exciting as well. The Spirit in the New Testament is always the Spirit of connection. That's because when the Holy Spirit comes to us, we are connected to God in a different way, at a different level, by being flung into this great mystery for love, for Christ, for the Father, and we're being connected afresh with all human beings in compassion and understanding and solidarity.

That's why the gift of the Holy Spirit is the foundation of the two great facts of Christian life: adoration and compassion. Because we are connected with Jesus' prayer to the Father; we are caught up in his loving, joyful, everlasting adoration of God. That's why, of course, one of the things Christians most want to do when their faith is really coming alive, is simply to gaze into the mystery of God – to let themselves be swept over that waterfall into the depths of God's everlasting love. And the other thing that they want to do, if their Christian faith is really coming alive, is to be there alongside all human beings in all the variety of their experience – to be alongside human beings who are rejoicing, who are succeeding, who are making something of their lives. To be alongside human beings who are grieving, who are lost, who are despairing. Adoration and compassion: two kinds of connection, because the Holy Spirit is the spirit that makes connections. *'He will take what belongs to me and declare it to you.'* The Spirit will make those connections real in our lives.

Which is why of course our Old Testament lesson today was all about connections. I expect quite a few of you learned the rather simpler version of the story, defined in the song:

*The foot bone's connected to the ankle bone
The ankle bone's connected to the leg bone
The leg bone's connected to the hip bone
Hear the word of the Lord.*

Ezekiel has a vision of a community that has been scattered and broken up – God's people shattered by disaster and defeat. And somehow that's also symbolised in the fact that the Israelites themselves, the individual members of that holy people, are scattered and broken up. They need to be connected with themselves again – the foot bone needs to be connected to the ankle bone and so forth. Because when we are away from God – lost, shattered, uncertain and grieving – we need to be put back together ourselves. We need ways of connecting with our own memories, our own experience. We need to be able somehow to draw in the memories of pain and difficulty, as well as the memories of joy and celebration. We need to be able to look at our lives and somehow see them as held together by the love of God.

It's a tough job. No wonder God says to the prophet "Prophecy to the wind." It says "Prophecy to the breath" in the version we've just heard, but I rather prefer that wonderful evocative phrase "Prophecy to the wind", imagining the prophet shouting his words out in the face of a great gale which is sweeping together all the bits of our lives – including the bits we'd frankly rather leave somewhere else. Sweeping it all together, winding it together – a kind of tornado, twisting, plaiting our lives, our memories, our realities together once again so that we as persons, as individuals, become whole. And in that very moment we are connected with the prayer of Jesus to the Father, and we are connected to the diversity and challenge of the whole human world.

The Spirit who makes connections. St Paul speaks of the *communion* of the Holy Spirit, the *togetherness* of the Holy Spirit, the *connectedness* of the Holy Spirit. That's what we're here to celebrate today: the power of God that makes connections by connecting us to God the Father through Jesus. Connecting us to a world of diverse and often terrible human experience. Connecting us to our own deepest selves. So that as we become more whole, more healed as persons, so we are more and more driven to adore God the Father in Jesus Christ, and to serve and stand alongside all God's human children.

This is a Diocese in which connectedness matters a great deal. In the last couple of days I've heard many times, that slightly rebarbative modern form of the word, 'connectivity'. But I take that to mean that this is a Christian family, here in the Diocese of Coventry, that is deeply committed to keeping connections alive. A vision of peace and reconciliation, which is embedded physically in every stone, every concrete block, every stained glass window of that great Cathedral – that is the symbol of the life of this Christian family in the Diocese of Coventry. Connection is what you are about.

It has been wonderful in the last few days to be alongside partners from elsewhere in the Christian world – from the Syrian Orthodox Church, from Germany, from Nigeria – and to understand how deep those connections go in the life of this Diocese. And if those connections are real, for all of you, for all of us, if they are things that you want to go on working at, and if you are constantly asking how do we deepen those connections and make still more connections, you will indeed be a family of God in this Diocese living by the power of the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of connection. And you will find by God's grace, more and more, that this is a place where you are driven to adoration and to compassion, and where you will see in each other lives being plaited together again that were in danger of being pulled apart.

So I thank God for this deeply connected family. And I pray that those connections will become stronger and stronger, livelier and livelier, as the years go on. So that as the world looks at the family of God in this Diocese, they will see a community which is full of what belongs to Jesus: the connections that are alive in Jesus' divinity and humanity, inseparably united in his one person for all eternity. The Christ, his body on earth, we are by the gift of that Holy Spirit.