

YEAR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In 2014 the Parish has been celebrating a year of special attention to the Holy Spirit – surely the most under-appreciated member of the Trinity. There have been many opportunities to discover just how important the Holy Spirit is to us in our Christian lives, and how we can call on his help to empower us in ordinary and extraordinary ways.

The principal event was a seven-week series of “Life in the Spirit” seminars, with inspiring guest speakers and the opportunity to pray for a renewed activation of the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives in Baptism and Confirmation. There have also been healing services, alternating with praise and worship evenings and Holy Hours on the first Thursday of each month.

Fr. Niven has been teaching in Mass on the role of the Holy Spirit, and every week in the news bulletin there has been a Holy Spirit quote from Pope Francis, for example: *‘Listen to the Holy Spirit because he is giving people the good news that God loves them and can renew, purify and transform their lives’*. Finally, in November we had a return visit from internationally acclaimed author and conference speaker Charles Whitehead. He told us of his many meetings with Pope (now Saint) John Paul II, who emphasised how important it is for us to pray to the Holy Spirit every day.

Although this special year is drawing to a close, there are continuing opportunities to grow and live in the power of the Holy Spirit. The “Life in the Spirit” prayer group (celebrating its 35th anniversary in 2015) meets every Thursday at 8pm in the Parish Centre Foyer, except on the first Thursday of each month when there will continue to be varying types of prayer service in the Church. Everyone is very welcome to any of these, and no previous experience or expertise is necessary.

Here are quotes from just three of the many people who have benefited from this Year of the Holy Spirit:

“The Life in the Spirit seminars opened a door for me and took me on such a beautiful journey of discovery. For me it was quite simply a life changing and very, very special experience which enabled me to connect with God’s love in such a deep and personal way, I am so grateful for this revelation. I now attend the prayer group meeting which is held in a spirit of true fellowship and openness and has genuine warmth and a welcoming atmosphere. It helps me and provides a very natural opportunity to continue to discover the power of the Holy Spirit in my everyday life.”

“I surrendered fully to the Holy Spirit and experienced the deep joy and peace of His presence through the seminars. The Holy Spirit is now my constant companion; I am wrapped in His warmth and comfort. He draws me closer to Jesus our Saviour and our Father in heaven.”

“Maintaining a control of my life exhausted me by the age of 39. For some while I had a great longing to have a relationship with God and I deeply desired forgiveness and a new, kinder way of living. I did not know where to start. Coming to the Life in the Spirit seminar opened for me a new way of seeing what matters, new way of making sense of what I do and most importantly, I started my very own and private conversation with God. I continue this special conversation. I have found a new focus and hope, as in God I do have a special guide, the Holy Spirit to navigate me on my life journey.”