

We have said during Eastertide that the Gospel of John is like a great courtroom drama, in which various witnesses speak, and various verdicts are considered, until at the end of all, sentence is passed and executed. Today Jesus calls on the Holy Spirit; but, extraordinarily, he can only begin to testify when the execution has taken place: or as Jesus puts it, “when I have gone to the One who sent me”.

How does the Holy Spirit enter the arena in the Trial of Jesus of Nazareth?

Obviously it has to be in the lives of the people who remain when he has gone to the Father.

Our life as Christians is the life of witnesses who make present, and give voice to, the Holy Spirit. The indwelling God will speak through us, and give evidence through us, of his nature and of the truth of Jesus, and of the miraculous nature of Christian life, born in Baptism, nourished by the Bread of Life, lit with the gift of new sight, gathered and led by the eternal Shepherd, believing in the one God has sent, finding life by following his Way and embodying his Truth, looking forward to the Resurrection, holding open the Gate of the Sheepfold to all who want to enter. The great issues of the earth - the search for truth and justice, the mystery of evil, and the ultimate purpose of the world itself - will all be illuminated by the life of even the littlest of the Christian family.

Every time we do the deeds of the kingdom - feeding the hungry, homing the homeless, forgiving the sinner - we contradict the evidence of the world, and uphold the evidence of the Son of God who came to give us the fulness of life. The Holy Spirit is that flowing gift of eternal life which the Father and the Son offer to each other in love. We must offer life to a world lapped in the bonds of death, and we cannot do this of ourselves. It is the Father who gives life, and he has made his Son the Source of life; and this life is the Holy Spirit, whom we receive on behalf of the world, and whose breath will give life to the world in eternity.

We must earth this high theology so that when we speak, when we share, when we are kind and loving to others, the Holy Spirit himself will be speaking in us. This obedience is like the obedience of Jesus; it is not only for his own sake, but for the sake of the world, which must be brought to believe.

*Consecrate them in the truth: your word is truth.
As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world;
and for their sake I consecrate myself,
so that they too may be consecrated in truth.*