OTA23 2011 (Read Only)

*And with your spirit*… this may not be the most significant change but for many of us it will be the most irritating one as we try and adapt ourselves to the new translation of the Missal.

So I have been trying to think of a way to help us to make sense, or bring our own value, to how we understand and interpret the word spirit in the context of our liturgical greetings.

One of my heroes is a French Jesuit called Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. I hope like me you may find one of his insights useful as we wrestle with the word spirit.

Teilhard once wrote: *“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience.”*

This insight turns our usual perception about the significance of our lives. In other words we don’t just live hum-drum lives with the occasional ‘spiritual’ high spot; on the contrary our lives have a richer, deeper, eternal dimension than we ordinarily realise or comprehend. However murky, confused or sad things may seem at times we each have a divine spark and yearning towards the beauty, truth and goodness of God.

One of the great privileges of being your parish priest is looking at you collectively as a community and as individually as unique personalities. You are far more than you think or appreciate and I draw great strength and encouragement from this. Our little chats and our shared laughs; alongside with the way we live, learn and worship together as followers of Jesus, leave me in no doubt that we are spiritual beings having a human experience.

Jesus reminds us that when two or three gather in his name he is with us. The more we come to appreciate this the deeper our bonds of love become. To quote Teilhard a second time:

*“Love alone is capable of uniting living beings in such a way as to complete and fulfil them, for it alone takes them and joins them by what is deepest in themselves.”*

What we sometimes say of individuals can also be said of a community. We say that someone has spirit when we recognise their giftedness, liveliness and vitality. And so when we hear the words *“The Lord be with you”* and respond … *“and with your spirit”* we could say we are speaking a deep truth that we each need to recognise about ourselves. What God gives and blesses is the unique giftedness, the spirit that is at the core of every single one of us.

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